The professional socialization of macro practice social workers: A narrative inquiry

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Mary C. Nienow

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Ross VeLure-Roholt

December, 2017

Acknowledgements

Any undertaking of this magnitude cannot be done in isolation. Social workers are not entrepreneurs, we are team builders. I have been so fortunate to build a team of supporters, without whom this work simply would not be possible. I have not had the straightest or shortest path in getting to this place. One of the positives about taking the "scenic route" is all the amazing people in cohorts above and below me I have had the honor of knowing. So many of those in my first cohort have remained friends and mentors, especially, Dr. Lisa Quinn-Lee, Dr. Pa Der Vang, Dr. Katherine Hill, and Anne Bomstad-Miller (my lifetime partner in crime!). The next cohort I "officially" joined are some of my dearest friends, Dr. Shawyn Lee, Dr. Kelly Nye-Lengerman and (soon to be) Dr. Alex Fink. In the following year's cohort, I met the woman without whom I'm pretty sure I never would have finished: (soon to be) Dr. Tonya (Cook) Horn. Within that same cohort, I became fast and forever friends with (soon to be) Dr. Kao Nou Moua, whom I hope to persuade to move back to the Midwest and become my colleague! There have been so many others (Parmananda Khatiwodi, Karen Goodenough, Dr. Tammie Kincaid, Dr. Sarah Ferguson, to name just a few more!) I have learned from, laughed and cried with, and celebrated all the abundance life has given us.

I would be remiss not to mention the enormous gratitude I have for those on my Doctoral Committee: Dr. Ross VeLure-Roholt, Dr. Liz Lightfoot, Dr. Katie Johnston-Goodstar and Dr. Tim Lensmire. Ross, as my adviser you have inspired me to be a better scholar and human being (not necessarily in that order). Your patience, wisdom and countless hours of reading, talking, and reassurance were above and beyond anything I could have expected or desired. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Liz, you are the reason I entered (and re-entered) the program. You supported and understood the balance required of a woman trying to parent, work, and pursue a PhD. You were the first person to encourage my interest in macro practice social work and gave me the opportunity to see how research on this topic was not only possible, but needed and important.

Katie, from the moment I met you I knew I had found the model of the kind of teacher and researcher I wanted to be. You gave so much of your time helping me to navigate the complexities of social work and the tensions we so easily dismiss. You are one of the most critical scholars I know who is also the most "real" and authentic to your true self and those with whom you engage.

Tim, we have not known each other for as long, but you became my champion almost immediately. Your sense of humor, insight and intellect have amazed me. You very quickly became an integral part of my committee and just knowing you were there has made me feel calm, confident and important.

To my dearest friends (especially my MBs) and family (mom, dad, in-laws, sisters, cousins, aunties, uncles), thank you for never once doubting my sanity or ability to accomplish what at times felt like an impossible task. Seeing my better self-reflected in your eyes has allowed me to persevere when really all I wanted to do was hide. You plied me with drinks, love and laughter, and this is the result. Here's to many more drinks, trips to the "Island" and crazy schemes of taking over the world (or at least a small corner of it).

As I find myself back at the institution where my social work journey began, I am reminded daily of the inspiring teachers and mentors who taught me how to be a teacher,

researcher, social worker, and scholar. Dr. Nick Smiar you introduced me to the world of macro practice and have balanced your support of my endeavors with some firm pushing (nagging!) which has always propelled me forward. Dr. Katherine Rhoades you let a scared 20-year-old present research at a national conference without ever doubting she could do it. You have both modeled for me what it looks like for a teacher to see and unlock all the potential in their students and I try to follow your examples every day.

Finally, my husband and daughter have been constant sources of inspiration and encouragement. Jeremy, you have taken on more than your fair share to make it possible for me to write, think, and have the time to pursue this degree. I know it hasn't been easy, but I am so grateful for your constant presence, patience and enduring love. Mary Catherine, I started my PhD just before you were born. It has taken much longer than I anticipated, but the time has gone by so fast. Raising you has been my greatest joy and always helped me keep in perspective what really matters in the end.

Dedication

I dedicate this to all the amazing individuals whose talents, passion, and hearts aren't always acknowledged or appreciated, but whose stories are what make the world a much better place to live.

Abstract

The following work is a narrative study on the professional socialization of macro practice social workers. It adapts the theoretical model of professional socialization developed by Shari Miller (2010). It explores the journey of 14 macro practice social workers from their early childhood to their present day professional life in order to better understand how they came to macro practice social work, what support they received, how they understood their work in relation to the more dominant perspective within the field of working with individuals and families, and the barriers they encountered along the way.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

This research seeks to understand how today's macro practice social workers navigate these historic and current tensions. How does one become a professional macro practice social worker when the dominant leaders and institutions responsible for your socialization discourage, marginalize or ignore your entry into the field?

In order to design interventions aimed at increasing interest and desire to engage in macro practice, especially within formal education, the narratives of macro practice social workers must be examined and elevated. These perspectives have the potential to provide valuable information on the supports and barriers practitioners faced before, during and after their social work education experience. While current discourse on macro practice social work often hearkens back to Jane Addams, Frances Perkins, or Bertha Reynolds, these figures provide historical context, but do not always guide or enhance our understanding of the impact professional socialization has on contemporary macro practice social workers.

To these ends, I conducted a narrative study of professional socialization among macro practice social workers to discover how these practitioners are navigating the world of macro practice social work. I was especially interested in how they came to macro practice social work, what support they received, how they understood their work in relation to the more dominant perspective within the field of working with individuals and families, and the barriers they may have encountered along the way.

Because narrative inquiry requires attention to the past, present and future, a brief background on the evolution of macro practice within professional social work is

provided in this introductory chapter. The tensions we experience today have been the same as they were over 100 years ago when professional social work in the United States first emerged.

The political and economic climate has also contributed to whether a systems level approach is used for solving major social problems. In times of war, depressions, or significant cultural shifts, macro level approaches have been used and promoted. However, assisting individuals to adapt to the dominant cultural, environmental and structural forces surrounding them has been a constant form of social service provision.

Chapter 2 presents Sherri Miller's (2010) theoretical framework for the professionalization of social workers which was used as the conceptual model guiding my work. Miller's (2010) framework envisions professional socialization as a lifelong process, which identifies three stages: pre-socialization, formal socialization and practice after formal socialization. Miller's (2010) model draws from theories of structural–functionalism and symbolic interactionism and allowed me to explore all three stages with respondents who are currently within the third stage of this socialization process.

Chapter 2 also presents the extant literature on professional socialization within macro practice social work. I looked at the literature from the three stages of Miller's (2010) model, trying to better understand what is already known about the socialization process of macro practice social workers. What I discovered is very little research on this topic has been conducted. Many studies have looked at professional socialization of social workers generally, but not specifically by their practice area interest.

In the area of formal socialization, there appears to be a consistent minority of individuals who come to social work for opportunities to engage systemically.

Internships and experiences with macro practice social work seem to engender a sense of efficacy and greater commitment and interest in macro practice social work. However, how these translate into professional practice has not been well documented or studied. There are some local and national efforts to engage and promote macro practice social work, but the scope and effectiveness of these efforts is unknown at this time.

The literature review ends with the unanswered questions I entered my research wanting to know, specifically, **"**What are the professional socialization experiences of macro practice social workers?" Subsequent questions include:

- What meaning do macro practice social workers attribute to these experiences of professional socialization?
- What supports and barriers did macro practice social workers experience in the pre, formal and post-formal stages of professional socialization?
- What impact has the professional socialization process had on the individual's vocational identity?

Chapter 3 describes the study's design. My study used a qualitative framework with a narrative inquiry methodology. I interviewed 14 MSW social workers with a variety of formal socialization (education) experiences, who were engaged in professional macro practice social work. Recruitment was done through a post on Facebook and outreach by one faculty at an MSW program in the Midwest. Respondents were screened to ensure they were engaged in macro practice social work and to determine the point in their socialization process when they became interested in macro practice social work. I tried to have a variety of interviewees who came to macro practice social work at different points in their journey. There was also a diversity among

the sample of those with and without an undergraduate degree in social work. The majority of respondents were white and female, which is representative of the overall field of social work. Ages ranged from mid-20s to late 50s. Among the interviewees, three separate Midwestern MSW programs were represented.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, with sections detailing each of the three stages of Miller's (2010) professional socialization model. The start of each section describes a particularly salient story which best represents the themes and ideas which emerged from the interviewees. For example, in the section on pre-socialization I discovered nearly all of the interviewees were interested in social justice issues from very young ages. They were involved in or exposed to institutions, such as religion, community, labor, and government early in their lives and saw these institutions as vehicles for solving larger social problems. In finding social work allowed them to do this kind of macro level intervention, every one of them described the experience as a "discovery" or "enlightenment."

In Chapter 4 I also explore the formal socialization experiences of my interviewees, which was specifically defined as their time in an MSW programs. Most interviewees found that their MSW program met their educational needs, but also struggled with translating their acquired knowledge into practice. Having access to role models in the form of faculty, internship supervisors, and other classmates seemed to key to their development of a macro practice social work identity. At the same time, these models weren't always available and there was a sense among respondents that their macro practice concentration and they themselves were not as highly valued as those in the direct or clinical practice concentrations.

Finally, Chapter 4 also describes the post-formal socialization experiences of macro practice social workers. This included their current job functions, how they identify with the field of social work and the role social work licensure has played in their career and professional identification. All of the interviewees were able to find positions doing the kind of macro level social work they had envisioned within approximately one year after graduating with their MSW. They each stated they do identify internally as a social worker, but their external identification varies depending on the circumstances. Who they talk to and the context matters a great deal for this identification.

Approximately half of the interviewees held a social work license. For those who are not licensed there was a sense of confusion, and in some cases fear of reprisal, on whether they could identify themselves as a social worker. Reasons for not becoming licensed included the cost, lack of value, and lack of relevance to their practice. All of the interviewees talked about the profession's lack of support for macro practice social work, but few were involved in efforts to correct or improve this situation. They seemed more interested in expending their energy on the larger social problems in which they were professional engaged.

Chapter 5 of this dissertation concludes with an analysis of the significance of the research and its contribution to the field. The impact of this study is an increased knowledge on the experiences of professional socialization for macro practice social workers and the meaning they constructed from such experiences. This information may be used to improve educational curriculums, educational standards and policies regulating social work programs across the country, state-level licensing policies, and macro practice leadership within the profession. However, I believe without macro

practice social workers taking a greater leadership role within the dominant organizations controlling the profession, such as the National Association of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Education and the Association of Social Work Boards, the tensions and barriers this research illuminates will continue as they have since the beginning of profession over 100 years ago.

Who Am I? An Introduction of my Journey to this Study

When I reflect on the first time I became interested in macro practice social work it was in 1998, about a year after I graduated with my Bachelor of Social Work degree. However, as I look back upon my time in college it is clear macro practice social work is exactly where I would end up. After graduating I was living in small Wisconsin town, with my soon-to-be husband, and my first job out of college was as a program coordinator for a domestic violence agency. At first, I thought this would be the perfect job for me. In college, I was a social work major with a Women's Studies minor and had been involved in several campus organizations dedicated to ending violence against women. I discovered very quickly the constant direct client interactions were draining, frustrating; and I felt completely ill equipped to provide my clients any kind of meaningful service. I was disenchanted after only a few weeks and didn't know what to do.

During a visit to my parents in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, I was walking with my long-time friend and describing my "quarter-life" crisis. I had recently had an Assistant District Attorney tell me one of the young women I was working with deserved the beating she received from her father because she had not done her homework and was rebelling against her parents. I felt completely powerless in making any difference,

which was what I thought the point of social work was in the first place. My friend, a new attorney, suggested I look for a job farther upstream in the system where I could still strive to make a difference in the lives of people, but didn't necessarily have to work with them day in and day out. It was like a light bulb went off in my head.

Why hadn't I thought of this before?! I had been the president of the campus organization Students Empowering Women against Violence, and led the annual Take Back the Night rally as a sophomore in college. I had started a chapter of the College Feminists and had single-handedly brought the Clothesline Project to our college campus as part of my Women's Studies capstone. I had been the president of our student hall council. My favorite courses were in Social Work policy and history, Women's Studies, sociology and political science. Conversely, my experiences with direct practice, including my undergraduate internship working one on one with at-risk adolescents in an alternative high school, part-time work in group homes with disabled and brain-injured adults, and volunteer work at the local domestic violence shelter near my college campus, felt like less of a fit for my personality and natural skill set. As my friend's words sank in, a sense of clarity and purpose began to grow within me and I knew macro practice social work was going to be my path.

At the time, I don't recall knowing it was called macro practice social work or even having learned how to do macro practice social work as an undergraduate. If it had been there, I missed it completely. The fact that it took someone outside of my profession has always angered, disappointed and confused me. Why didn't I know macro practice was an option? How could I have avoided the heartache and pain (and quite likely poor service to my clients) of working in a direct practice position? What have

others done? How did they figure it out? These questions have been the driving force of my interests and research ever since.

Who Are "We"?

From its inception, the field of social work has struggled to define itself and its unique contribution to ameliorating problems facing individuals (micro) and communities (macro). Micro practice social work, sometimes called direct or clinical practice, is commonly understood to include interventions focused on individual or familial challenges, barriers or pathologies. Micro practice social work may include case management, counseling, group therapy, child welfare investigation or discharge planning from a hospital (Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen, 2009). The majority of those practitioners in the United States who are licensed in social work, or have the title social worker, are practicing at this level (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS] 2016, 2017; Whitaker & Arrington, 2008).

Macro practice social work, also known as community practice, indirect practice, or administrative social work, comprises work aimed at changing social conditions for populations of oppressed or vulnerable people (Miller, Tice, & Hall, 2008). Interventions, methods, or practices may include lobbying, community organizing, policy analysis, program development, research, or administration (Haynes & Mickelson, 2010; Pritzker & Applewhite, 2015). Often social workers engaged in this kind of work do not carry the title *social worker* and many are not licensed as social workers (Pritzker & Applewhite, 2015).

The profession has vacillated in both its philosophical understanding and practical application of the most effective and efficient place to concentrate its efforts at change

(Healy, 2000). Payne (2006) argues at a metalevel the profession of social work wants to embrace a "both/and" complexity, but at the level of practice a focus on individual or population manifests as an "either/or" dichotomy, with most of social work practice operating at a micro level.

Complicating the scope of social work practice has been the desire by social workers to establish themselves as legitimate professionals on par with other more well-regarded professions, such as medicine, nursing, psychology and law (Gitterman, 2014). This has required the field of social work to grapple with its own power and influence over and under the people, communities and systems it engages. This quest for legitimacy has meant a dissonance between social work's intention of social reform with its practice of social control and bureaucratic administration. Social work has strived to be known as the profession which both helps people to, "accommodate to the status quo, ***and as*** (emphasis added) challenging the status quo by trying to bring about social change" (Chambon, Irving, & Epstein, 1999, p. 9). The history of social work as a profession in the United States is fraught with this tension. Not wanting to let go of either goal, the field has rhetorically maintained both, but in practice, education and regulation, has chosen more often to focus on accommodating the status quo over challenging the status quo as its primary identity and function.

The next chapter explores the development of social work as a profession and the critical junctures the field has faced as it struggled to operationalize its identity, especially in the areas of social work practice, education and regulation. The intention of this chapter is to provide a brief background on the presence, contribution and eventual marginalization of macro practice social workers who fought their colleagues to identify

the profession as one concerned with progressive social reform. With this historical framework, the reader can better understand the subsequent chapters outlining theories of professional socialization in social work. It also frames the context for the current lived experiences of the 14 macro practice social workers who shared their stories with me of their own journeys to becoming macro practice social workers within a field where they are acknowledged, but rarely represented or lauded.

Chapter 2

Historical Tensions in Social Work Practice

It Started with a Break-up

Most historians attribute the inception of professional social work in the United States to its break from Sociology in the late 19th century. By the late 1800s the U.S. had started to formalize its charity provision, moving away from the model of providing assistance only to family or neighbors, called outdoor relief (Pumphrey & Pumphrey, 1961). State Boards of Charity were developed with the power and authority to determine charity provision for entire communities within their jurisdiction (National Conference on Charities and Correction [NCCC], 1893) Leaders of these charities (predominately white, protestant men) came together, to discuss their work and exchange ideas around resources and practice (Trattner, 1999), under the auspice of the American Social Science Association, which began meeting in 1865 (Austin, 1983). However, by 1879 these leaders did not see a place for their work within the ASSA conference (Bruno, 1957). They found the proceedings of ASSA too philosophically and theoretically oriented to inform their on-the-ground work of social service provision. They broke away from ASSA to form their own conference, the National Conference on Charity and Correction (NCCC), later renamed the National Conference on Social Work (NCSW; Bruno, 1957).

"Social Work" Emerges

Over the next few decades the NCCC grew and became the primary gathering for social workers those interested in charity provision, later settlement houses, and throughout the progressive era, social and government reform. After WWI, a focus on

professionalization became primary among those who had begun to identify themselves as social workers (Lubove, 1965). However, in 1879, at the start of the NCCC, the term *social work* had not emerged into the U.S. vernacular.

One of the first occurrences of the term *social work* in the U.S. was during the NCCC in 1885. It came from a paper given by C. S. Loch (1885), the Secretary to the London Charity Organization Society. Like many trends during U.S. early history, the influence of British and European ideas was common (Trattner, 1999). Loch's use of the term *social work* was in the context of providing poor relief through almshouses. He indicated the increase in London's population and rising need for economic assistance made the kind of personally focused admission requirements of the past obsolete and inefficient: "We have crept on from precedent to precedent in this branch of social work no less than in others that are more manifest to the world at large" (Loch, 1885, p. 350).

Loch's paper reflects the prevalent philosophy of the time among Euro-Americans. Assistance to the poor by the dominant culture had slowly moved from being the responsibility of small towns, families, or churches to formal charitable organizations called Charity Organization Societies (COS; Lubove, 1965). These organizations studied and analyzed poverty through scientific and methodical ways and streamlined the charity process by establishing rules for receiving assistance, record keeping of who received assistance, and discouragement of private giving (Schneider, 1992; Trattner, 1999). However, after the depression of 1893, a new model of social assistance began to emerge in the form of the settlement houses.

Leaders in the Settlement House movement also identified themselves as social workers and also used the NCCC as a platform to share their ideas and perspectives. This

new way of approaching "social work" wasn't always met with welcome arms by the leaders. Those Board of Charity Directors who had broken away from the ASSA, nearly 20 years before, were now the "old guard" of the NCCC, and their emerging image of what it meant to be a social work profession did not always fit with those leading within the Settlement House movement.

The Settlement House movement, also adopted from England, represented a developing awareness of the larger environmental and systemic forces impacting individuals, families and communities (Pumphrey & Pumphrey, 1961). Settlement Houses emerged during the period of time in American history called the *Progressive Era*, where a focus on governmental reform and community organizing efforts arose (Garvin & Cox, 1995). Settlement houses represented a shift from almsgiving and "scientific charity" to a community based approach using pragmatic and participatory methods to engage and involve newly arriving immigrant groups along with vulnerable populations such as women, children and the mentally ill among the dominant Euro-American populations (Garvin & Cox, 1995).

The first settlement house, Toynbee Hall, was established in London in 1884 (Barnett & Barnett, 1909) and run primarily by young, English, University students. In the United States, the first settlement house, University Settlement, was founded in New York City two years later in 1886 (Berry, 1986). Unlike the U.K. model, most of the U.S. settlement house residents were young middle class white women who had graduated from "women's colleges" (Trattner, 1999). These young women were looking for vocational alternatives to marriage at a time in history when marriage in the dominant Euro-American culture was one of the few viable options (Austin, 1983, p. 358).

Settlement houses were established in lower income neighborhoods, usually with high immigrant populations whose neighborhoods and living conditions were considered substandard by dominant middle-class Anglo-Americans (Park & Kemp, 2006). Residents of the settlement houses focused on the needs of their immediate neighborhoods. Many were known for their involvement with social and political reforms and the development of community-level programs and services (Chambers, 1963).

Jane Addams, who founded Hull House in Chicago in 1889, has become an icon to macro practice social workers. Addams exemplified early macro practice social work and was involved in Chicago politics, helped enact child labor laws, fought for worker rights, supported suffrage, helped found the NAACP, and was a leader in international peace work (Carson, 1990). While not all settlement houses, or leaders and residents, were as active as Jane Addams, the settlement house movement is commonly known as the foundation of macro practice social work in the United States.

Proceedings from the NCCC between 1895 and when it stopped meeting in 1984 are rich with debate between leaders who all identified as social workers, but disagreed on the most appropriate approach to social service provision. For example, in a speech given by Jane Addams at the 1897 National Conference on Charity and Correction on settlement houses she eloquently compares the approach of the charity workers to that of the settlement house approach, saying:

> Let the settlement represent the sentiments of the working people who have received no charity. It is so easy to stand just on the line, and then to get across the line, and to have the public opinion of your neighbors and of the charitable societies think of you as a pauper. I have not that great fear of pauperizing people, which many of you seem to have. It is the feeling with which you give a

> piece of bread or the feeling with which you take it which determines whether the transaction will be a pauperizing one (Barrows, 1897, p. 345).
>
> Mary Richmond's response to Addams comments:
>
> Hull house has a great reputation. People are caught by names and a great deal of money and misapplied enthusiasm have been dissipated in the imitations that have not succeeded ... distributing a cheap and sprinkling sort of charity, can do more harm ... it can pretend to be scientific, when it is nothing of the kind. (Barrows, 1897, p. 473)

While today we no longer have settlement houses, nor COS, the debates have not substantively changed within current discourse of social work leaders.

While the term *social work* as a concept wasn't widely used at the NCC prior to the 1900s, the proceedings in the late 1800s indicate it was entering American vernacular with varying understanding of its meaning. As professional social work developed in the early 19th century, the term *social work* became ubiquitous in the NCCC proceedings. By 1915, the term was used nearly 500 times in reference to charity work, settlement houses, education, and professionalism (Nienow, 2014). The COS, which focused more on individual adaptation to society, and the settlement house focus on societal adaptation to the needs of communities, both laid claim to the title social worker. The dual identity for social work has remained a defining characteristic of the profession.

It is also important to acknowledge during this time of reform certain populations were ignored by these efforts and their community needs were not met by the more dominant form of the emerging social service movement. Support to Native Americans, African Americans and Asian American immigrants were less common in both the Settlement House and COS methods of intervention (Kogut, 1970; Lasch-Quinn, 1993). Parallel organizations and informal networks of mutual aid and assistance operated

outside of the mainstream service frameworks (Garvin & Cox, 1995). For example, within the African American community, networks of self-help and mutual aid were prominent (Lasch-Quinn, 1993). The social workers within these communities also lived among those they were serving with a dual focus of serving the individual and improving the conditions of the population (Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Lasch-Quinn, 1993). Birdye Henrietta Haynes, an African-American woman, not as well known as Jane Addams or Mary Richmond, was the first African American to graduate from the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy and lead two prominent Settlement Houses for African-Americans in both Chicago and New York (Carlton-LaNey, 1994). The stories of so many of these early social workers and leaders of color have been lost or obscured by the more popular narratives of social work's beginnings, which even this dissertation's narrative can be accused.

Is Social Work Even a Profession?

During the 1915 National Conference on Charities and Correction, Abraham Flexner's speech entitled "Is Social Work a Profession?" had significant reverberations throughout the social work community (Reisch & Andrews, 2002; Austin, 1983; Trattner, 1999). To the chagrin of many attending, Flexner's pronouncement was social work was not a profession (Austin, 1983). His determination was based on meeting 6 criteria he deemed essential for status as a profession. These criteria included: (a) an intellectual operation with significant practitioner individual responsibility, (b) Use of scientific approaches to practice and learning, (c) a distinct and delineated scope of practice, (d) the ability to transmit the profession's technique to future practitioners, (e) the ability to independently organize its members, and (f) must be "altruistic in motivation" (Flexner,

1915). Flexner went on to describe how social work at the time did not meet many of these characteristics, most notably their lack of a clearly delineated scope of practice and inability to transmit the profession's technique (of which he doubted social work had) to future professions. Micro social work advocates quickly responded to debate over professional status of social work, elevating their status.

While Flexner himself was not a social worker, and his assertions on the nature of what makes a profession were not the ultimate authority, historians (Reisch & Andrews, 2002; Austin, 1983; Trattner, 1999) believe Flexner's speech was the impetus for the increased training and focus on professionalism pursued by social work leaders. Many found a response to Flexner's critique in 1917 when Mary Richmond published her seminal work, *Social Diagnosis*. This text came to signify a response to the criticisms Flexner raised about social work. Without a similar response from the Progressive Era and Settlement House leaders, micro practitioners took the lead in defining professional social work practice.

During WWI social workers began providing service to soldiers and their families, especially in stateside public hospitals through the American Red Cross. This new role gave social workers both a fresh clientele and enhanced professional status in the public eye (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). Micro social work practice began to be viewed as offering a valuable service to society. Providing care and respite to service families moved social workers away from their focus on the poor and more vulnerable populations which had comprised the COS client base (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989).

A turn toward patriotism, distrust of socialism and a rise in conservative forces also shifted the potential trajectory of social work's educational and professional

evolution. Macro practice social workers were no longer considered reformers, progressives, or community heroes, but constructed as deviants, agitators and dissidents (Davis, 1984). Jane Addams, a prominent leader within the new social work endeavor, and a lifelong pacifist, was ostracized and accused of disloyalty to her country for championing peace and associating with those accused of both communism and socialism (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). The emphasis on professionalism combined with a distrust of social reform enhanced micro practice while simultaneously diminishing macro practice social work's influence on the profession.

Along with these political changes were new ways of understanding mental health. Freud and psychodynamic theory brought attention to the intrapsychic and pathological origins of poverty, alcoholism, trauma and disease (Grob, 1994). Mary Richmond's publication, *What is social case work?* (1922), also lead to confidence and faith in the case work technique and concept of diagnosis (Trattner, 1999). Schools of social work at this time, developed programs of specialized training, such as medical and psychiatric social work. The casework technique became even more entrenched based on these popular medical models (Lubove, 1965).

After WWI, public recognition of social workers as trained professionals, capable of providing mental health services to the middle and upper classes increased (Lubove, 1965). Professional social workers began to market themselves as legitimate mental health workers for individuals, families and children. The conservative political climate of the 1920s witnessed a retrenchment in the social reform sentiment of the Progressive Era (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). A desire to legitimize the profession of social work and formalize its educational and practice models became the overarching goal of the field

prior to the Stock Market Crash of 1929 (Chambers, 1963). It became increasingly difficult during this time for macro practice social workers to engage in the same kind of social action and system reform they had practiced just a decade before (Garvin & Cox, 1995).

The 1930s represented a time of increasing federal involvement in the developing welfare state. The stock market crash of 1929 and ensuing depression gave social workers rising prominence in government positions (Trattner, 1999). Harry Hopkins, FDR's Secretary of Commerce, and Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, were instrumental in the crafting and implementation of the New Deal which gave the U.S. some of its most progressive social policies to date (Hopkins, 2009). At the same time, with the rise of Labor Unions and the Rank and File Movement, a more radical sentiment emerged within the field. Many of these social workers who identified as socialists eschewed the profession's focus on professionalism and called for the profession to reject the compromises of the FDR's New Deal policies. Instead of professionalism, they urged social work to unionize and join the labor movement in the fight for collective bargaining and more progressive social insurance measures (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). These voices did not prevail and the political climate returned, once again, to one of a more conservative nature as the United States entered into WWII.

The model of direct practice with individuals and families has been a constant and dominant force within the profession of social work. The same cannot be said for the social change function of the profession. While it has had brief moments of popularity, acting as savior and sage during moments of national or international crisis, it cannot be maintained the profession has elevated it to a place of prominence or even normativity.

Historical Tensions in Social Work Education

Formal schools of social work were also started in the late 19th to the early 20th century. Prior to formal social work programs, both COS and settlement houses provided practical training programs with an emphasis on apprenticeship. COS offered opportunities for "friendly visiting" and short in-house training on charity provision. Settlement houses offered fellowship programs for residents in partnership with local colleges and universities (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). The majority of settlement house residents already had 4-year undergraduate degrees and the purpose of additional formal education was to learn the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of social problems. This focus again set the Settlement House approach apart from the COS model, whose leaders were many of those who had broken away from the ASSA because of its overreliance on theoretical and philosophical orientations toward social issues. An apprenticeship model was more common within the COS with many of the "staff" serving as volunteers to visit and assess homes or provide client services within the agency setting.

During the 1897 NCCC, Mary Richmond denounced the informal, apprentice-model training of charity workers, calling, instead, for independent schools with a standard generalist curriculum, stating:

> What an incalculable gain to humanity when those who are doctoring social diseases in many departments of charitable work shall have found a common ground of agreement, and be forced to recognize certain established principies [sic] as underlying all effective service! (Barrows, 1897, p. 183)

Given Richmond's connection to the COS's system of individual service provision, and her connection to the Russel Sage Foundation which provided significant

funding for many of the early COS and schools of social work, it is unlikely she believed these principles would equally include the settlement house model of social service (Franklin, 1986).

The first formal social work training program focused on the individual adaptation philosophy of philanthropy at that time, and was offered through the New York Charity Organization Society in 1898 (Lubove, 1965). Students learned skills in charity work and visited local social service institutions (Garvin & Cox, 1995). Twenty-seven "friendly visitors" (unpaid volunteers, usually white protestant women, who would visit and provide advice to families in need while assessing their acceptability for charity) attended this first program and 3 years later, over 70 had participated (Lubove, 1965). Interestingly, and possibly as a political compromise to the agencies and organizations with a strong interest in retaining their workforce, the educational model advocated by Richmond and others contained a robust field work component. Students were matched with other COS agencies (but not Settlement Houses), and expected to gain professional training and socialization to the field of social work through supervised practice (Lubove, 1965). This model of field training remains within social work education today and is considered its signature pedagogy (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015).

An Uneasy Relationship with Higher Education

Given the earlier break with Sociology, content in these early schools of social work was less focused on theoretical or larger sociological concerns and more upon the practical provision of social services (Kendall, 2002). Despite two philosophical traditions, one of individual adaptation and the other of social reform, the COS model of

"social work" had a significant influence on these early educational initiatives and established itself as the primary way of providing social work education.

Early schools of social work had connections to colleges and universities, although the relationships were not strong (Shoemaker, 1998). Social work educators were trying to distinguish themselves from the theoretical and normative focus of Sociologists (Costin, 1983). Early social work educators relied upon and worked within agencies which provided practicums for their students (Lubove, 1965). Schools of social work operated independently and resisted affiliation with universities because of fear that a broader focus in the social sciences would take away from the emerging social work methodological pedagogy (Franklin, 1986). At this time, most schools of social work adopted a similar model of direct practice training with substantive field training. The anomaly was the Chicago Institute of Social Science.

Founded in 1903 by Graham Taylor and Julia Lathrop, both leaders at settlement houses (Chicago Commons and Hull House, respectively), the Chicago Institute began as an extension of the University of Chicago. Five years later it was operating as its own school, named the School of Civics and Philanthropy (Lubove, 1965). In contrast to the schools being started by COS leaders, the Chicago School focused on training in the social sciences and on methods of research, policy analysis and social movements (Costin, 1983). In 1920, under the leadership of Edith Abbott (also trained at Hull House), it merged with the University of Chicago and became the School of Social Services Administration.

Abbott's vision to incorporate social work training within the higher education system was not in line with current trends of the time and (Costin, 1983). The merger

caused significant opposition, and the Russel Sage Foundation, which was a strong financial supporter for many independent schools of social work, withdrew financial support it had previously pledged (Costin, 1983). The Russel Sage Foundation's opposition was significant, as it was a major funder for social work publications, associations and organizations dedicated to the COS model. Mary Richmond herself had been appointed director of their Charity Organization Department in 1909 (Franklin, 1986). Regardless, Abbott persisted and solicited funding from other sources, most notably the Rockefeller family. As social work education became broader, more theoretical and scientifically based, university affiliation became the norm (Costin, 1983). Abbott's efforts at the time were indeed groundbreaking and helped to forge the path for today's current system of university education for social work practice, including content which today is defined as macro practice in its orientation.

While the integration into higher education was facilitated by proponents of macro practice, a micro focus quickly became core curriculum. The 1920s saw creation of the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW), which sought to organize and advance the social work profession through the standardization of social work curriculum (Kendall, 2002). The majority of schools belonging to ASSW were graduate schools with a primary focus on specialized training in case work methods, which had come to define early micro practice in social work (Stuart, Leighninger, & Donahoe, 1993). This curricular approach was strengthened by the 1929 Milford Conference report: *Social Casework: Generic and Specific* which sought to define a generalist model of social work curriculum based upon the casework approach (Lee, 1929). The Milford Conference report was a culmination of years of meetings between

key social work educators and national leaders of the time (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). This report became the foundation upon which all social work educational curriculum was later built (Lubove, 1965).

Proponents of macro practice continued to advocate for a focus on populations in social work, but the conservative times of the 1920's and stronghold of the COS model, meant the Lane Report (Lane, 1939), a study of community organizing methods and processes within social work didn't emerge until a decade after the Milford Conference Report. This report, which emerged at the end of the 1930's, a time of significant economic depression and a more liberal sociopolitical environment can be considered a primary piece of support for macro practice education in schools of social work. The Lane Report identified community organizing as a distinct social work process "to bring about and maintain a progressively more effective adjustment between social welfare resources and social welfare needs" (Lane, 1939, p. 499). Because of the Lane Report and ongoing discussion within the field of social work, by the mid-1940s community organizing, policy development was included in generalist social work curriculum. Still, it took until 1962 for it to be adopted as a legitimate area of specialization, despite clinical specialties such as medical, psychiatric and school social work being in place for decades previously (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014).

Since 1962, macro practice has continued to be a specialization within graduate schools of social work (e.g., policy, administration, research, community organizing, or evaluation), and courses incorporating macro practice social work concepts are now required for undergraduate accreditation.

Despite these integrations and efforts by national organizations, less than 7% of all BSW internship placements are providing students with any kind of significant macro practice experience (CSWE, 2015). MSW students with a specialization or concentration in macro practice make up approximately 4% of all students enrolled in an MSW program. It is clear macro practice social work continues to play a minority role in graduate schools of social work and is not the specialization students are seeking or being offered.

Historical Tension in Social Work Regulation

A final consideration in review of the tension within social work's history is the quest for state and public sanction through regulation. Regulation for social workers first emerged in Puerto Rico in 1934, followed by California in 1945 (Hardcastle, 1977). Prior to licensing, registration was the primary way states regulated social work practice (Bibus & Boutte-Queen, 2010). Registration provided an opportunity for those who self-identified as practicing social work to have their names maintained on a list by a state agency. These lists were made available to the general public for their discretionary use (Gandy & Raymond, 1979). In some cases, there was a fee required to be included on the list; or particular requirements that the social worker would have to meet, such as education, training, or experience before they could be included (Gandy & Raymond, 1979). There were no penalties for the person who practiced social work without registering (Hardcastle, 1977). Registration also did not represent endorsement by the state of those on the list (Bibus & Boutte-Queen, 2010).

The push toward licensing social workers in the United States began in the early 1960s with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) as the impetus for this

movement (Gandy & Raymond, 1979). NASW is one of the oldest and most prominent social work organizations in the United States. Created in 1955 as an amalgam of several other similar social work organizations, NASW now has a membership of 120,000 social workers and has been vitally involved in the professionalization of the field (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], n.d.). In 1960, NASW endorsed public regulation of social workers through certification (Garcia, 1990). In 1969 their Delegate Assembly took an even stronger stance and passed a resolution calling on state chapters to work toward passage of licensing laws (Hardcastle, 1977). Their reasons for supporting licensure were outlined in the 1975 Delegate Assembly Policy Statement (National Association of Social Workers, 1975):

1. Establishing a public legal definition of social work that recognizes the differential levels of social work practice.
2. Protecting consumers and clientele rights and raising standards of service competence of practitioners in both agency and independent practice.
3. Establishing a public accountability in the delivery of social services based on professional standards rather than inconsistent private standards of performance, and that protects the practitioner in the performance of social work tasks.
4. Provide a basis for the development and enhancement of the profession within the context of other social institutions and professions.

Despite the strong support of NASW, states struggled with crafting and passing licensing legislation. It took nearly 35 years for all states in the U.S. to adopt social work licensure as their primary form of regulation (Bibus & Boutte-Queen, 2010). During this

time a patchwork of registration, certification and licensure were developed as each state navigated its own political landscape and varying degrees of support for such legal intervention (Plitt Donaldson et al., 2014). This lack of support came not only from lawmakers, but the field itself which lacked consensus on the need or desire for licensure despite endorsement by NASW (Gandy & Raymond, 1979).

Those in opposition to social work regulation questioned the motivation and impact licensure would have on the field (Browne, 1999). One of the biggest concerns was licensure would create elitism among practitioners and exclude those without specific educational qualifications from participation in the workforce, even though they may have been practicing effectively for many years (Garcia, 1990). In essence, they feared a monopoly was being created in which only certain people could perform certain services.

The licensing movement continued regardless. In 1979 the American Association of State Social Work Boards (ASWB) was founded to help states establish social work licensure (Biggerstaff, 2000). ASWB (2015) developed the Model State Social Work Practice Act to assist in the crafting of state regulator legislation. The Model Social Work Practice Act includes language for licensure at the baccalaureate and graduate levels, and includes scope of practice for clinical and generalist practice. It does not, however, include language for a specific macro practice license (Association of Social Work Boards, 2015). Some states have revised their social work practice statutes to include macro practice activities, thereby requiring those with a social work degree to become licensed in order to use the title *social worker* and have their practice legally sanctioned by the state. (See Appendix A).

The state of Michigan was the last state to pass a Social Work Practice Act in 2004, which did include language for a macro practice level of licensure (Social Work Licensure Act, 2004). The efforts for macro practice licensure were lead primarily by the NASW, Michigan chapter, and the various Schools of Social Work at major Michigan universities (Nienow, 2013). Michigan currently has over 11,000 social workers who hold a macro practice license (Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, 2017). Two other states, Missouri and Oklahoma, have also included a level of licensure for macro practice in their state statutes. However, only 17 social workers hold this level of licensure in Missouri and only 1 holds it in Oklahoma (Plitt Donaldson et al., 2014). Part of the reason Michigan has so many licensed macro practice social workers is because in 2004 their licensure law dually licensed all certified graduate social workers practicing at the time (Nienow, 2013).

Despite having a macro practice license in statute, the exam used to obtain the license is based on the ASWB Advanced Generalist exam (Bureau of Professional Licensing, 2017). Approximately 18% of the content on the Advanced Generalist exam relates to macro practice content (ASWB, n.d.). This means 72% of the exam being used to determine licensure, whose purpose is to protect the public and provide professional accountability, does not pertain to the knowledge, skills and practice of the individuals taking it (ASWB, n.d.).

Conclusion of Chapter 2

The history of professional social work in the U.S. has always been comprised of ontological tensions between serving the individual and changing the system. In practice, we saw this tension emerge in the late 19th century as a conflict between the scientific

charity model of the Charity Organization Societies and the community based, social reform model of the Settlement Houses. This tension continued throughout the 20th century as social workers increasingly sought professional recognition and moved closer to the medical model of service provision and away from a social reform orientation which was not supported by "a society which worshipped individualism" and "was not receptive to the institutionalization of social reform and social action as an established pattern of community living" (Lurie, 1959, p. 10).

In education, this tension played out as an initial rejection of the University model of instruction and competition between undergraduate and graduate programs. Individual "schools" of social work emerged with weak associations to larger colleges. The disdain of the early leaders of social work for theory, philosophical grounding and sociological understanding was grounded in the profession's early break away from Sociology and a desire for practice-based education focused on the vagaries of service provision. Macro practice social work from its inception embraced the liberal education model of the University and eventually the profession aligned itself with this more dominant model of instruction. Debate about the most appropriate preparation, at the undergraduate or graduate level also marked the early years of social work education. Despite these debates and their eventual resolution of generalist undergraduate education with specialized graduate education, macro practice was always a late comer to the recognized and standardized curriculum of social work education. Today, the number of macro practice specializations and students engaged in macro practice training falls below 10% of all programs and students (CSWE, 2015).

In regulation we saw a desire for professional recognition and sanction by the state in the form of licensure as one way to gain this status. However, framing of this recognition was under the guise of public protection, which meant the direct practice function of serving vulnerable individuals and families. Inclusion of macro practice social work was not a consideration in the early debates of social work regulation, and only in the past 20 years have efforts at including macro practice social work within the definitions of licensure emerged. To date, only three states offer a macro practice license, but very few practitioners make use of this license (Plitt Donaldson et al., 2014).

Over the past 150 years the political and economic climates have influenced the nature of social work and its approach. Despite some periods of progressive social reform, the profession has remained firmly entrenched within the dominant paradigm of promoting individual adaptation to societal norms. This approach allows social work to operate as a legitimate profession, sanctioned, funded and defined by the state. In return, it has sacrificed the potential for an identity based upon more radical and transformative practices many social workers envisioned and still try to put into practice.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Model

Entering the Fray

This chapter presents the conceptual model, *the theoretical framework for the professional socialization of social workers,* developed by Shari Miller (2010) which guided my thinking and research on the key dissertational question, "What are the professional socialization experiences of macro practice social workers?" Miller's (2010) framework (see Figure 1) incorporates both structural functional and symbolic interactionist perspectives. She argues both structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism are needed to adequately describe the process of professional socialization and each theoretical perspective offers a piece of looking at the whole (p. 927).

Professional socialization is defined as the process an individual undergoes as they move from a position outside of a specific profession to the inside of the profession, reflecting its values, norms and culture (Barretti, 2004). This kind of socialization can occur within the formal educational context and in the professional realm when a new practitioner is acculturated to their work environment. It is also possible for socialization to begin prior to formal education. This socialization can occur through cultural upbringing and life experiences as well as the individual's own anticipatory socialization for a particular career path (Miller, 2010)

Early theories and research on professional socialization first emerged in the field of medicine, primarily through the work of Robert Merton (Barretti, 2004; Weiss, Gal, & Cnaan, 2004). Merton, a sociologist by training, is known for his theoretical perspectives and research on structural–functionalism and functional analysis (Elwell, 2013).

Structural functionalism is often used to describe the interaction of societal structures with individual behavior with each serving the other in maintaining stability and homeostasis (Lett, 1987). Merton argued conflict and change are inevitable in any system and advocated focused analysis in determining both the explicit and latent functions of structures in maintaining both the status quo and the interruption of hegemony (Merton, 1968).

In the mid-1950s, Merton brought together a series of studies examining the professional socialization of medical students (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957). Using a structural–functionalist perspective to better understand how students became professionals, these studies posited medical education was the structural vehicle through which medical students received the requisite "values, attitudes, knowledge and skills" necessary for application to their "professional (and extra-professional) situations" (p. 287). These studies focused primarily on the function of this education in development of a relatively uniform and standardized professional cadre (Barretti, 2004; Merton et al., 1957; Miller, 2010). This approach was criticized by other researchers and theorists, such as Becker, Geer, Hughest, and Strauss (1961) who argued Merton's focus on the educational structure left out the personal agency, dissension, constructs and conflict these students experienced as they became professionals.

Becker et al. (1961) argued symbolic interactionism was a better way of explaining how newly trained medical professionals integrated their learning into practice. Theories of symbolic interactionism emerged from the field of Sociology in the late 19th century, especially through the thought and writing of George Herbert Mead (Blumer, 2004). Coined in 1937 by Harold Blumer, *symbolic interactionism* theorizes

individuals will act when something is meaningful to them and meaning is derived from their own interpretation during social interaction with others (Blumer, 1969).

The application of structural–functionalism to my study would suggest the primary way macro practice social workers learn how to be professionals is through their MSW program. The knowledge, values, and skills they acquire, mainly through instructors and other models during their education, forms the basis for a coherent and predictable professional identity.

The application of symbolic interactionism would suggest students choose their specialization or concentration based upon their interaction with a number of different instructors, their advisor, their own cohort, and other meaningful people in their lives, both before and after their MSW program. They interpret the information received as meaningful or not, based upon their own experiences, relationship with the person providing the information and specific cognitive frameworks.

Miller (2010) also asserts what happens both before and after the formal educational process is as important as what happens during this stage of socialization. Miller's model draws from the literature on professional socialization, specifically, Shuval and Adler (1980) and Simpson and Back. (1979); both earlier studies on the professional socialization of medical students and nursing students respectively. Miller (2010) relies on these studies because, like social work, medical and nursing schools prepare practitioners to integrate both scientific and practice-based knowledge in their decision-making process. All three courses of study require intensive clinical or internship work, and have developed a professional culture with transmittable "attitudes, values and interests" (Miller, 2010, p. 929). Miller's (2010) model was also matched to

dimensions found within the literature and reviewed by social work educators (n=6) during her adaptation.

Miller (2010) presents professional socialization as a series of three stages: Pre-socialization, Formal Socialization, and Practice after Formal Socialization. Miller (2010) defines the outcomes of professional socialization as acquisition of knowledge and skills, values, attitudes and professional identity. Within each of the stages Miller (2010) identifies two processes of importance. In pre-socialization both prior socialization and anticipatory socialization occur. Prior socialization includes the early experiences of the individual, such as their family of origin and the environmental influences impacting them at a young age. Anticipatory socialization occurs when the individual chooses a particular profession to join and begins the process (e.g., applying to a school of social work, volunteering in a domestic abuse shelter) of taking on the attributes of their selected profession. Pre-socialization occurs before anticipatory socialization and can impact not only the professional selection, but the ways in which the individual pursues entry into the profession (Miller, 2010).

Formal socialization comprises the content of the social work program, as well as the program's structure. Content includes the knowledge, values and skills transmitted to students while they are enrolled in the program (may be BSW or MSW). The structural factors include the culture of the particular program, its faculty and student makeup, the relationship with field instructors and community organizations used for field sites and the curricular sequence used by the program. There is an emphasis on examining the distribution of power among all these variables.

The Practice after Formal Socialization stage consists of the practice setting where the new professional begins their work and the professional's "situational adaptation" (Miller, 2010, p. 931). Situational adaptation refers to how the individual responds to particular situations within their practice setting. Depending upon the context of the situation and the outcome of the professional response, socialization will occur in varied and complex ways throughout the lifetime of the individual.

The purpose of using Miller's (2010) model is to articulate what experiences, supports and barriers make up these stages, specifically for macro practice social workers. While Miller's (2010) framework was not developed for macro practice social work specifically, it is broad enough to allow for application to this study. In the presentation of her framework, Miller (2010) does not offer a positive or normative description of each stage, but instead suggests the framework be used in research for articulating the experiences of these phases or by social work programs or planning bodies for designing of policies and programs. The model incorporates both the structural functionalist and symbolic interactionist theories of socialization with its inclusion of the student's interaction within institutional and organizational structures (home, school, work), as well as the meaning made by practitioners of such interactions. This study examines what these stages have looked like for 14 currently practicing macro practice social workers. Before presentation of the findings, the remainder of this chapter examines the extant literature on the professional socialization of macro practice social workers.

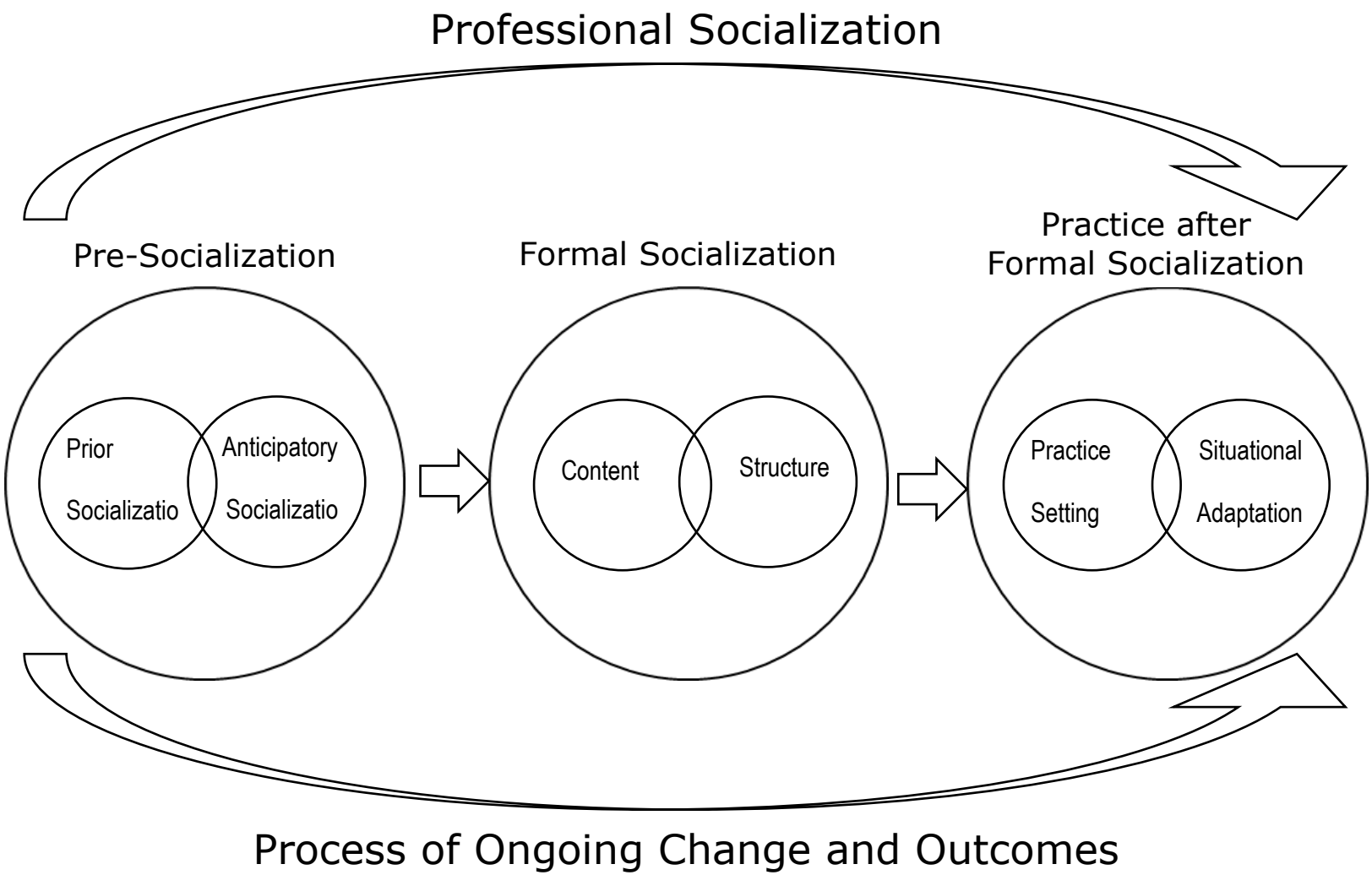

Figure 1. Miller (2010) framework for professionalization of social workers.
Used with permission from Dr. Miller.

Chapter 4

Literature Review

Most professional socialization research in social work has relied upon the structural–functionalist approach (Barretti, 2004; Miller, 2010). For example, Barretti (2004) conducted a review of 29 empirical studies focused on professional socialization in social work prior to 1998 and found all but the four qualitative studies she reviewed used a structural functionalist approach. These quantitative studies measured expected attitudes, behaviors, or values of students over time as proxies for the relative "success" of social work programs to socialize students into social work professionals. Her concern with such approaches is they do not offer enough information on how students of social work change or take on the role of professional social worker throughout the educational process. Measuring only a few independent variables in a study, reduces professional socialization to those factors only, and does not lend empirical evidence to the impact the educational process is having on students and their ability to take on and transmit their knowledge, skills or values into action as professionals (Barretti, 2004).

The topic of professional socialization is not one which has received much attention recently in the social work literature. In the 1960s–1980s a great deal more was written on the professional socialization of social work students (Barretti, 2004). This makes sense given formalization of social work curriculum during this same period (CSWE, n.d.) It also stands to reason a majority of the literature at the time operated from a structural–functionalist approach (Barretti, 2004; Miller, 2010) as researchers tried to standardize the curriculum for social work students at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Literature on the pre- and post-formal socialization processes is also sparse. The factors influencing choosing social work as a profession have been explored in some depth, but less attention has been paid to the level of practice in which individuals ultimately choose to engage. How macro practice social workers develop their identity and practice methodologies after formal education is also limited. Because so little of the research relies upon a more nuanced and individualized description of the socialization process, many of the articles reviewed offered a snapshot, but not a complete picture of how professional socialization is occurring for macro practice social workers.

Pre-socialization: How Do They Get There?

While little research explores the reasons social workers engage in macro practice social work, related studies on social work career selection helped provide groundwork for my current investigation. This research has been especially focused on the desire of students to enter private clinical practice and a concern they are moving away from the core value of the profession to serve the poor and most vulnerable populations. Researchers have also been interested in the role gender has played, given the predominance of women with the field. Finally, attention has been paid to how adverse early life experiences impact the desire to enter a helping field.

One of the most studied topics surrounding social work career selection, especially in the 1980s and 1990s was whether social work students were more interested in becoming private practice therapists, rather than working in the public arena with vulnerable or poor populations (Butler, 1990; D'aprix & Dunlap, 2004; Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Rubin, Johnson, & DeWeaver, 1986; Specht & Courtney, 1994). Evidence on how strongly this desire influences students' subsequent professional

pursuits is mixed. Rubin, Johnson , and DeWeaver (1986) noted as many as 85% of entering MSW students began with intentions to practice as a therapist, but this percentage dropped to less than 60% at graduation. Butler (1990) found similar interest in private practice, with over 60% of students stating they would like to engage in private practice. However, she also discovered these same students were committed to serving the poor through traditional social work interventions (such as case management) and recommended longitudinal research to determine how they integrated these two desires.

Similarly, in a mixed-methods study of social work students within a social work program at one university in the U.K. (52) and a social work program at a university in Canada (43), Christie and Kruk's (1998) quantitative data found the desire to work with clients and be a part of a profession were the most significant reasons for seeking professional training in social work. However, subsequent interviews with students revealed greater ambiguity and complexity within the decision to become a social worker. The researchers (Christie & Kruk, 1998) suggested previous research on desire to become a social worker may be examining motivation for becoming a social work *student* as many of the incoming students they interviewed did not have a clear idea of what social workers do. They also found students were greatly conflicted about their ability to "achieve their goals, such as social change…" (p. 29). Using mixed methods allowed them to better understand the complexity of social work career selection than if they had relied on a single or just a few isolated data points.

Another common theme in the older research on social work career selection was the presence of adverse childhood experiences. There is some evidence as many as two-thirds of social workers have been *parentified* as children, or were the oldest in birth

order, leading them to take on caretaking roles early in life (Lackie, 1983; Marsh, 1988). Exposure to family members with mental illness (Rompf & Royse, 1994) or alcohol and drug abuse within the family system (Black, Jeffreys, & Hartley, 1993; Rompf & Royse, 1994) have also been found more present among social workers or social work students than the general population.

It is possible the influence of early family life experiences found by researchers may also have exposed social work students and practitioners to role models and significant people, including other social workers, psychologists or therapists, who played pivotal roles in their lives (Rompf & Royse, 1994; Whitaker & Arrington, 2008). For example, in a 10-year retrospective look of surveys completed by 804 BSW students enrolled in an introductory social work course, nearly 61% of students said they first became aware of social work as a profession through high school courses, guidance counselors or social services offered to them or their family (Hanson & McCullagh, 1995). This supports the theoretical perspective of Blumer (1969) and symbolic interactionism, in that young people aspire to emulate the significant people within their lives (Calhoun, 2010). The lack of these role models in terms of macro practice may also provide support for why so few students choose macro practice social work.

It has also been suggested social work, which is predominantly female-centered (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017), offers women a professional vehicle to meet gender expectations of their assigned caretaking role (Abramovitz, 1996; Ladd-Taylor, 1994; Lubove, 1965; Vincent, 1996). Quimby and DeSantis's (2006) study on the influences of women's career choices found the presence of role models was one of the most significant predictors of career choice. Young girls are still more likely to see women in

roles such as social worker, nurse, or secretary and aspire to these positions because they can see themselves in these role models (Barretti, 2004; Guy, 2011; Quimby & DeSantis, 2006).

Looking to examine these influences further, Biggerstaff (2000) designed and validated the Social Work Influence Questionnaire. What she discovered was social work students who identified more strongly with the title *therapist* over *social worker* were statistically more likely to have had adverse childhood experiences, or family which exposed them to social services. In her research, she identified 4 key factors influenced an individual's choice in social work: (a) desire to be a therapist, (b) adverse personal and family experiences, (c) perceived prestige of the profession, and (d) values in line with social work's social change mission (Biggerstaff, 2000). Biggerstaff found commitment to social work's social change mission among the over 500 MSW students she surveyed was significant, regardless of whether students wanted to participate in public or private practice. This finding speaks to the more nuanced reasons individuals are coming into the profession of social work. It also may lend support to the idea social work students are interested in macro practice work, but do not understand how to do it professionally.

Finally, in one of the few studies examining pre-socialization of macro practice students, Byers and Stone (1999), interviewed 6 BSW seniors and 5 recently (less than 2 years) graduated BSW students, who were identified by social work faculty as being activists. Reasons given for entrée to activism included early activist experiences in their family of origin, personal experience with systems of oppression, a sense of belonging, a belief change is possible and a sense of efficacy in political work (Byers & Stone, 1999). Offering social work as a viable career option to high school or early college students

may help them realize their professional aspirations earlier and change the discourse and more dominant character of the profession.

In summary, the pre-socialization literature offers a complex and certainly incomplete picture of why people choose social work as a career. Issues of gender, role models, early family experiences and values are just some of the components which have been explored. Research using qualitative methods often revealed more nuanced reasons for choosing social work which could not be reduced to only one or two variables. Choosing macro practice social work specifically was the focus for only one of the studies, but within each of the other studies, elements of the desire to impact social change did emerge as one reason for pursuing a social work career. A better and deeper exploration of this desire to engage in social change, where it comes from and how it can be nurtured is a needed contribution to this literature.

Formal-socialization: What Influence Does Formal Education Have on Selecting Macro Practice?

One of the key limitations of the research on formal professional socialization in social work is the inconsistencies in definition and measurement of the term *professional socialization*. Most authors focus on the *effects* of formal social work education and reduce their appraisal of professional socialization to student acquisition of key knowledge or key values measured on only one or two variables using standardized pre- and posttest assessments. Unfortunately, the results have been mixed and no consistent evidence shows how social work programs are socializing students in terms of either knowledge or value acquisition (Barretti, 2004).

In a meta-analysis of 29 articles on the impact social work education (socialization) had on traditional attitudes or values of the profession of social work (such as positive attitudes toward the poor (Orten, 1981), trust, altruism, independence (Merdinger, 1982), social justice (Moran, 1989), not imposing personal values on clients, (DeFilice, 1982), Barretti (2004) found no consistency in the impact of social work education. Of the 29 studies reviewed 22 had either a negative change or no change in how students adhered to social work attitudes and values. While not as prolific, my literature review on professional socialization of macro practice social workers also found a preponderance of quantitative literature on professional socialization in social work with mixed results about the effectiveness, especially in the area of formal education.

In an older study of the formal professional socialization process, O'Connor and Dalgleish (1986) tested the change in practice constructs between beginning, midcourse and senior social work students. While they found the social change constructs of social work practice among senior students were significantly higher than they were for beginning or midcourse students, controlling for demographic factors such as age, sex, or socioeconomic status, those with prior experience in social services were less influenced by educational curriculum (O'Connor & Dalgleish, 1986). Most students developed a greater understanding of social change concepts through formal education. Yet when provided with the opportunity they chose individual rather than social change constructs to understand direct practice.

Despite the significant change in personal constructs of social work for graduating students, these same students still interpreted social work practice vignettes from an

individual or clinical perspective. They did not suggest systemic causes as either solutions or antecedents to the problems they were reading. So, while students may *believe* social work should be about social change, they don't know how to translate this knowledge into a practical application of social work.

Similarly, Han and Chow (2010) examined professional socialization of MSW students by analyzing their views on the mission of social work. They ascribed to the belief social work's mission is comprised of two competing ideologies—one of individual adaptation and one of social/institutional change. While acknowledging the two ideologies are not necessarily mutually exclusive, researchers asked students to indicate which they valued more. The authors explored the influence demographics, social work curriculum and student involvement in social action and internship had on their ideological understanding of social work's mission.

What they found was over half of the 1424 students surveyed at entrance and exit believed the mission of social work was social change. Upon completion of the program, 25% of those who had indicated an individual adaption orientation changed their view to social change and 15% of those with a social change ideology shifted to individual adaptation (Han & Chow, 2010). Demographics did not seem to influence group membership for students either at entry or exit, except for their political identification. Not surprisingly, those identifying as liberal were more likely to adopt a social change perspective than those who considered themselves moderate or conservative (Han & Chow, 2010).

Of particular interest for my study, are those students who moved from an individual adaptation perspective to a social change viewpoint. Experience with social

action activities was a significant predictor of their movement, however two-thirds of students reported no social action activity during their MSW program. It bears considering what impact requiring social action activity within the curriculum may have on the professional socialization of social work students.

Identity

As explored in the research on pre-socialization, a variety of studies and commentaries in the 1980s and 1990s focused on the move of social work into private practice and away from the poor and oppressed (Butler, 1990; Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Rubin et al., 1986; Specht & Courtney, 1994). Although certainly not a new concern in social work, it was a popular area of study at the time. Findings on whether social work students were moving away from "traditional" case work with the most vulnerable were mixed. These studies also focused primarily on student interest and did not look at how this interest translated into their subsequent occupational pursuits.

An example of the impact formal professional socialization had on student identity with specific social work values came from Bogo, Raphael and Roberts's (1993) Canadian study of MSW students. The authors defined *traditional social work identity* as one in which students would want to work "in publicly funded social work settings rather than private practice. Students are expected to choose to work with disadvantaged, involuntary, and chronic clients ..." (Bogo et al., 1993, p. 280). The majority of students expressed interest in traditional social work. Of interest to my study were the small cohort of students (approximately 8%) who came to their MSW with interest in community development, policy and research. These students were not identified as having a "traditional social work" identity and instead were treated as a separate cohort.

Bogo, Michalski, Raphael, and Roberts (1995) readministered their survey to the same cohort after 1 year of MSW education. The most significant finding between the pre-and posttest was a reduction in student interest for private practice, however a corresponding decrease in desire to work with voluntary clients did not occur. Student interest in supervision activities decreased, but there was a significant increase in interest for community development work (Bogo et al., 1995).

It is possible this movement toward community development reflected a growing understanding of social work and the career opportunities available as they completed their program. It is difficult based on the data provided to understand what influenced these changes, whether it was the curriculum, cohort, field experience or other factors which contributed to the increased student interest. There is no follow up data to know whether those students who became more interested in macro practice social work were engaged in such activity after graduation.

Almost 10 years later, Weiss et al. (2004) in a cross-national study of social work programs, conducted a similar longitudinal panel design. The survey measured the professional preference of social work students as a proxy for successful professional socialization. Professional preferences measured included type of population students wanted to work with (children, families, elderly, disabled, etc.); type of setting (hospital, nursing home, agency, clinic); methodological preference (macro vs. direct practice); and the sector or organizations (e.g., public, private, nonprofit). They too found a strong adherence to community practice for a small group of students at the beginning and end of their social work program, but a decline in overall interest for direct practice from beginning to end. Researchers also tried to determine if the particular orientation of the

school of social work influenced students' population or setting preferences. One of the Israeli programs focused more on a generalist curriculum while the U.S. and one Israeli program were known for their research and social justice foci (Weiss et al., 2004).

Very few differences were found between the three programs and the changes in students' professional preferences (Weiss et al., 2004). Students in the U.S. were slightly less likely than Israeli students to change their professional preference. This is most likely a product of U.S. students being enrolled in a Master's degree program vs. BSW students in Israel with no previous professional education. Weiss et al. (2004) concluded professional social work education does not significantly impact the professional preferences of students. The majority of students in the study were less interested in working with the most vulnerable populations at a macro level and preferred populations such as families and children in need of counseling or therapy in private settings such as clinics, hospitals, or a public school setting.

Despite 2 out of the 3 schools having a more macro practice orientation, differences in professional preferences of these students with those in the generalist program did not manifest. Such a finding could speak to the broader political and economic factors considered by students as they enter the formal socialization process. It is also possible those interested in social action or community organizing are not even considering social work as a career path because they anticipate its focus on individual change or therapeutic practice (Olin, 2013).

Field Experience: Turns Out the "Doing" Matters

One of the key components of social work education is its field experience. Considered the "signature pedagogy" by the Council on Social Work Education,

accredited social work programs must provide students 400–600 hours of field experience prior to graduation (CSWE, 2015). The majority of social work internships are in nonprofit or public agencies (CSWE, 2015), with over 90% of internship experiences at both the BSW and MSW consisting of direct practice and generalist case management for a particular population (CSWE, 2015). There is some evidence macro practice social work opportunities for students during this critical pedagogical experience may impact the interest and choice of students when they enter professional practice (Byers & Stone, 1999; Perry, 1999; Han & Chow, 2010).

In the qualitative study by Byers and Stone (1999), field experiences were mentioned as one-way students discovered their interest in macro practice social work. This finding was supported by the secondary data analysis by Perry (1999) as well as Han and Chow (2010) of MSW students in accredited social work programs across California. Perry's (1999) findings showed primary interest in macro practice did not change for students in their first year of internship, regardless of the type of activities students engaged in—micro or macro. However, second-year students with a field placement which included macro practice social work activities were significantly more likely to indicate a primary interest in macro practice at the end of their program.

Activity in the macro practice internship was also shown to predict a change in ideological view point in the Han and Chow (2010) study. As was seen in Perry's (1999) research, exposure to macro practice activities in the first year had no impact on whether students saw the mission of social work as focused on individual adaptation or social change. However, students who indicated macro practice activity in their internship during their second field placement had significant changes in their ideological

perspective. They moved from believing strongly in the role of individual adaptation to the favoring the efficacy of social change interventions. They were also significantly less likely to move in the other direction—from holding a social change perspective to embracing one focused primarily on the individual (Han & Chow, 2010). These findings seem to indicate exposure to macro practice activities can influence student interest as well as their understanding of how they can apply social work concepts to macro practice work. The earlier findings O'Connor and Dalgleish (1986) which showed students' constructs of social work had shifted to understanding the social change orientation of social work, but not their application, may have been different if these students had been given additional opportunities outside the classroom to encounter practice situations using macro social work strategies as their solution. This hypothesis is further supported by the work of Boehm and Cohen (2013).

In a more recent look at professional socialization for macro practice in social work education, Boehm and Cohen (2013) defined professional socialization as the development of commitment to community practice social work. They surveyed 277 undergraduate social work students at two different Israeli schools of social work. Their study was one of the few which considered the specific elements of formal social education and their impact on professional socialization. What they discovered was a required community practice field placement, course work, and class readings did not appear to increase commitment to community practice. The only variable found to increase this commitment was if the student had a sense of self efficacy in completing community practice activities. While this finding may seem contradictory to Perry (1999) and Han and Chow (2010), the specific exploration of increased self-efficacy by

Boehm and Cohen (2013) may be the confounding factor. The California data showing the influence of second year field placements with macro practice experiences may actually reflect a sense of self-efficacy for macro practice among these students.

Findings from Byers and Stone (1999), Han and Chow (2010), and Perry (1999) offer some evidence macro practice field experiences can have an impact on student interest and commitment to macro practice, although this conflicts with findings by Boehm and Cohen (2013). The study by Boehm and Cohen (2013) is unique because of the requirement students in Israeli BSW programs have at least one practicum in a community practice setting. Social work field experiences in the United States are required to provide opportunity for engagement in macro practice and students are measured and graded on demonstrating these competencies (CSWE, 2015). However, it appears very few internships provide a significant level of exposure to macro level social work interventions (Regehr, Bogo, Donovan, Lim, & Regehr, 2011) and so the opportunity for professional socialization to macro practice social work is not robust.

You Can Be a Macro Practice Social Worker as Long as You Do Micro First

Another area of research which may impact professional socialization is a perceived bias within schools of social work for a micro over macro practice focus. An earlier, but still often cited study by Neugeboren (1986) surveyed 74 deans in schools of social work throughout the United States and asked whether they agreed with the following: "Direct service skills is a necessary foundation for effective performance of administrative roles and functions" (p. 5). Over 60% of those surveyed said they agreed with this statement. Additional analysis by Neugeboren (1986) showed schools with

deans who agreed with this statement had fewer students with a macro practice concentration as compared to those who didn't.

In a more recent look at structural barriers within the educational system, Rothman (2013) conducted a survey of members belonging to the Association of Community Organizing and Social Administration (ACOSA). Over 30% indicated their school did not support a macro practice curriculum (Rothman, 2013). This lack of support was indicated in several ways: not hiring macro practice faculty, not integrating macro and micro concepts within courses, not offering macro level field placements; and advising students to choose micro level concentrations to improve their job prospects (Rothman, 2013). Students and faculty are also aware of the pressure to pass state licensure exams shortly before or after graduation to be competitive within the job market (Ezell, Chernesky, & Healy, 2004). The lack of support for formal socialization into macro practice social work ultimately impacts the next stage of socialization within the practice arena.

From Student to Professional: Post-formal Socialization

Research on the post-formal socialization stage of macro practice social workers is especially difficult to find due to the dispersed nature of these professionals. Many macro practice social workers are not licensed or members of professional associations, like, NASW, and therefore are more difficult to locate via membership or state lists (Hill, Ferguson, & Erickson, 2010). Studies examining post-formal socialization were more likely to be qualitative and descriptive in nature. Their findings indicated a sense of professional isolation for macro practice social workers as they navigated both belonging to the dominant organizational and bureaucratic systems; while simultaneously trying to

resist and reform these same structures. At the same time, all of the subjects interviewed or studied were employed in relatively significant social change positions, which means social workers are finding gainful employment in places they can impact macro level systems.

In his ethnographic study of 24 MSW radical social workers in the mid-1980s, Wagner (1989) attempted to understand how radical social workers maintained their idealism in the face of conservative political climates which they also depended upon for their own financial survival. The subjects came to social work with what Wagner (1989) described as "missionary zeal" (p. 390). Wagner's study took place as much as 20 years after his subjects entered the profession and despite starting in a place outside the dominant framework of social work at the time, all of Wagner's subjects were in professional positions of relative success. However, the interpersonal conflict and workplace tensions they faced were also high, with 19/24 saying they had faced high tension at work in the last 2 years and 6/24 (25%) having left the field of social work permanently at the time of the study (Wagner, 1989). However, for the remaining professionals, an adherence to radical practice was still present, although a similar allegiance to the profession of social work itself was encompassed by just 25% of the individuals. This finding seems to speak to the salience of ideology and an orientation to living and working by a particular set of standards which are not valued or supported. Despite being conducted nearly 30 years ago, very similar findings were discovered among today's macro practice social workers in my study described in Chapter 4.

Mondros and Wilson (1990) conducted an exploratory analysis with 42 organizations on the East Coast employing at least one full-time community organizer.

They were interested in discovering what factors brought people to and kept people in community organizing. Similar to Wagner (1989), they found most organizers (70%) were motivated by the desire for meaningful work focused on social change and consciously sought out these work opportunities. A smaller minority of respondents came upon community organizing work as a result of chance. Mondros and Wilson (1990) concluded community organizers seek and remain in this work because they see it as the best way to impact unfair conditions they have witnessed or experienced, which seems to hearken back to the research showing adverse early experiences may impact the kind of work individuals eventually seek out as adults

In more recent research, identity and professional regulation were also the salient themes. In a study of 35 self-identified community practice social workers, researchers found just over half of the respondents *sometimes*, *never*, or *rarely* identified as a social worker (Lightfoot, Nienow, Moua, Colburn, & Petri, 2016). For many this was due to fear they could not call themselves a social worker because they were not licensed. For others, it was discomfort with having to explain why they did not fit in with the more common notions of what social workers do. A sense of professional isolation and disconnection from the field was expressed by many of those interviewed (Lightfoot et al., 2016).

Many respondents also discussed their antipathy toward licensure in their state (Lightfoot et al., 2016). They expressed frustration and anger toward the licensure exams and boards of social work which regulated social work practice. As far as the licensure exam, there was a general consensus the exams did not contain macro practice content and were not a fair assessment of their knowledge or skills. Because these exams did not

pertain to their level of practice, several respondents said the board of social work only wanted to license them so they could make money or act punitively toward macro social work practitioners (Lightfoot et al., 2016). Even among those who were licensed, a sense of irritation with the expense, lack of appropriate supervision, and lack of adequate ongoing training offered, was expressed (Lightfoot et al, 2016).

These views of identity and regulation are not unfounded. Direct practice or clinically licensed social workers outnumber licensed macro practice social workers nearly 2000:1 (Plitt Donaldson et al., 2014). Eighteen states offer an Advanced Generalist license, but only 18% of the exam pertains to macro practice content (ASWB, n.d.). Only 2 of these 18 states (Florida and South Carolina) require any kind of macro practice educational or practice experience. No state Board of Social Work requires membership of a macro practice social worker, although some require other mental health professionals, such as a psychiatrist to serve on the Board (Plitt Donaldson et al., 2014). This lack of inclusion in the formal structures of the profession may relate directly to the concerns expressed in the study by Lightfoot et al. (2016).

We've Got to Do It Ourselves.

To help address the feeling of isolation and bolster the identity of macro practice social work a number of state and national initiatives have been launched. One example is in Minnesota where the Association of Macro Practice Social Workers (AMPSW) was developed to help macro practice social workers who were "feeling isolated from other social workers and from the profession as a whole" (Hill et al., 2010). Despite having an NASW chapter in their state, these macro practitioners still felt their professional needs were not being met. Through a series of meetings, needs assessments and membership

surveys, the organization identified the need for connection between macro practice social workers and professional development or continuing education courses related to topics of macro practice social work (Hill et al., 2010). This organization continues to operate and offers social events and occasional training and networking opportunities.

A national initiative, the Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice, emerged in 2010, after UCLA emeritus professor, Jack Rothman (2013) conducted a survey on the barriers to student specialization in macro practice within schools of social work (Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice, n.d.). One of the report recommendations was the Association for Community Organizing and Social Administration (ACOSA) form a taskforce to further investigate and promote macro practice within the field of social work (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). In the spring of 2013, the Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work (Commission) was formed (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014).

Accomplishments of the Commission during its first 2 years included a variety of activities aimed at both social work students and social work professional (Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice Social Work, n.d. a.). In year 2 the Commission announced its 20% by 2020 campaign. The campaign aims to increase the number of MSW students choosing a macro practice concentration or specialization to 20% by 2020. Currently less than 10% of graduate social work students are in this category (CSWE, 2016). To this end, a number of social media videos for use with recruiting students to social work macro practice were developed and distributed to schools throughout the country (Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice, n.d. b.). The Frameworks Workgroup produced a working paper on the key macro practice

frameworks needed for social work education (Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice, n.d. b)

In 2014 members of the Special Commission met with the three prominent social work organizations, ASWB, CSWE and NASW, to discuss ways these organizations can assist in promotion of the campaign and support macro practice within schools of social work and in the social work field (Malai, 2014). This meeting lead to more comprehensive macro practice standards in the 2015 Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) put forward by CSWE (Malai, 2014). CSWE also worked with Commission members to revise their data collection on information pertaining to MSW and BSW programs across the country. Currently the Special Commission is working with CSWE to develop a macro practice guide for MSW programs to use in the development of macro practice content. The purpose is to help schools provide content which will assist students in meeting the macro practice components of the EPAS competencies.

The Special Commission continues to work with ASWB to recruit more licensed macro practice social workers interested in writing exam questions for its national licensure exam as well as reviewing the scope of practice required by states for macro practice social work licensure. Ongoing discussion related to macro practice licensure is also occurring. NASW has also been helping the Special Commission identify macro practitioners and leadership programs across the country and partners with the Special Commission to engage local NASW chapters in state-level policy and advocacy.

These initiatives are promising, but it remains to be seen how much impact they will have on the social work profession. There is still a lack of information on how

macro practice social workers are engaging and thinking about their work as well as how non-social work influences are operating to socialize them into the professional world they inhabit. They also seem to be primarily lead by academics within higher education institutions. Outreach with macro practice social workers not connected to their schools of social work may not be familiar or engaged with these efforts and continue to operate in professional isolation.

So, What Do We Know?

This chapter reviews current and past research and initiatives on the professional socialization of social workers, with a particular focus on socialization into macro practice. The starting point for this review was the meta-analysis conducted by Barretti (2004) who conducted a review of 29 empirical studies focused on professional socialization in social work prior to 2002. All but the four qualitative studies she reviewed used a structural functionalist approach—measuring either expected attitudes, behaviors, or values of students over time. Barretti's (2004) concern with such approaches is they do not offer enough information on how students of social work change or take on the role of professional social worker throughout the educational process.

While collectively the literature presented supports some minimal success of social work education in socializing students toward a macro practice orientation, there is still a lack of agreement in terms of defining which components of the social work curriculum or specific instructor pedagogy may have impacted the change in attitudes, values or ideology. All the literature reviewed indicates the need for further research on the professional socialization process. Findings of the various studies do support a

segment of students come to their education with an interest in community practice social work and maintain this focus throughout their education (Bogo et al., 1993; Han & Chow, 2010). There is also evidence students who come to social work believing it is a way to work with individuals or families in therapy, discover macro practice, and shift their interest in this direction (O'Connor & Dalgleish, 1986; Perry, 1999). It is not clearly known what impacts these shifts in attitude and interest or how they are manifested in practice.

In reviewing the articles examined by Barretti and a review of literature from 2003–2017 it was found even less is known about the professional socialization of macro practice social workers. Very little qualitative research has been done around professional socialization or examined the impact of factors before or after the social work educational program was completed. This is the purpose of my study, to better understand the lived experiences of current macro practice social workers and the meaning they make of their own professional socialization as well as the barriers and supports they have encountered along their journey. In light of the literature, Miller's conceptual framework, and my own personal and professional interest, the questions I entered my study wanting to know were:

1. What are the professional socialization experiences of macro practice social workers?
2. What meaning do macro practice social workers attribute to these experiences of professional socialization?
3. What supports and barriers did macro practice social workers experience in the pre, formal and post formal stages of professional socialization?

4. What impact has the professional socialization process had on the individual's vocational identity?

Chapter 5

Methodology

Professional socialization of macro practice social workers has not been a prolific topic of research in the social work literature. As I explored in the literature review, this lack of representation is due to a number of factors. The historical evolution of social work is one in which a focus on individual pathology, case management and mental health diagnoses conferred more economic and professional prestige to its practitioners (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). Disrupting power, systemic reform and organizing people and communities did not and still does not afford the same level of legitimacy (Reisch, 2015). The direct or micro practice curricular focus in schools of social work has also contributed to the lack of representation of macro social work practitioners in prominent areas of discourse (Rothman, 2013). A narrative framework allows for the prioritization of these voices and its approach acknowledges the experiences of macro practice social workers and their journey in becoming a professional.

The purpose of using qualitative research is to obtain a deeper understanding of a process or phenomenon (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Qualitative research is most appropriate when the problem or issue being studied requires an inductive exploration (Creswell, 2007). The professional socialization research in social work has been primarily quantitative in nature (e.g., Boehm & Cohen, 2013; Bogo et al., 1995; Csikai & Rozensky, 1997; Han & Chow, 2010; Regehr et al., 2011; Segal-Engelchin & Kaufman, 2008).

Much of this research has been fragmented, narrow, or not presented a comprehensive picture of the multitude of variables and contexts impacting the

professional socialization process both before and after formal social work education. This means there is also a lack of understanding on how socialization into macro practice social work is occurring. A qualitative approach can begin to provide rich and thick descriptions of these processes to better inform our curriculum development, assist in building supportive institutional environments, and foster interpersonal interactions leading to successful socialization outcomes.

Narrative inquiry in the human sciences is often attributed to the Chicago School of Sociology as students and faculty used life histories as one way to better understand diverse populations (Chase, 2005). In the early 20th century, narrative accounts were used as one source of data. A realist perspective of the narrative was applied, and less attention was paid to word choice, power, and meaning construction (Riessman, 2008). This changed in the 1960s as researchers moved away from positivism and turned toward examinations of power, identity and social construction (Langellier & Peterson, 2004). It is an appropriate methodology when examining questions of identity and socialization.

Narrative inquiry offers the researcher an opportunity to explore with their participant the course of events unique to their experience and relies on the specific and local experience of the individual (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It does not look for grand theories or generalizations which can be universally applied, but instead focuses on four key elements, as described by Pinnegar & J. Gary Daynes (2007):

1. The recognition of the relationship between the researcher and researched as a dynamic, contextual and evolving process of meaning making;
2. The use of words to convey the data and findings, rather than numbers or particular statistical analyses;

3. The importance of the particular over the general; and

4. The use of stories for knowing and understanding.

I chose a narrative methodology because the primary goal of my research was to understand how macro practice social workers experienced the process of professional socialization. Based on Miller's (2010) framework (see Chapter 3), the professional socialization process occurs somewhat chronologically from pre-to post-formal socialization and can be understood as a lifelong process. The narrative approach allowed me to explore with my participants how they navigated this process and how they ascribed meaning to the events, people, and contexts they encountered along the way.

Recruitment and Sampling

A purposive sample of social workers with an MSW from a CSWE accredited school of social work who are currently engaged in professional macro practice social work were recruited for this study. A single post on my Facebook page listing the criteria for subjects and intent of the study was used. A colleague shared the information on a national list serve and a faculty at a local university distributed the call for participants to former students whom she believed met the criteria of the study. The result of these simple recruitment efforts resulted in over 35 interested practitioners.

To determine if subjects were engaged in professional macro practice social work, I operationalized macro practice in the same way as Pritzker and Applewhite (2015) in their study on the career trajectories of macro practice MSW social workers:

> Macro practice social work is defined in this study as work in public and private organizations designed to promote systemic change for vulnerable populations and communities. Macro responsibilities may include program planning and

management, administration, human resources, volunteer management, marketing, training and development, education, grant writing, community development, cause advocacy, lobbying and policy practice, and research and evaluation.

Prior to recruitment I determined the following categories which reflected the point in time the individual first became interested in macro practice social work:

1. Before beginning a BSW program
2. During their BSW program
3. After their BSW
4. Before their MSW, but with no BSW
5. During MSW, but with no BSW
6. During MSW, with a BSW
7. After MSW

Because narrative inquiry focuses primarily on the experiences of the individual and the conceptual framework being used specifically looks at the socialization process, identifying the point in time this process began was critical to the analysis and application of the framework. Each potential interviewee was asked during the screening, "At what point in time did you first become interested in macro practice social work?" The benefit of purposive sampling in this study was the ability to select participants who both met the criterion of having experiences of professional socialization in macro practice social work and came to macro practice social work at different points in time.

Of the 35 interested individuals, 14 were selected. Interested individuals outside of two Midwestern states were not included in the sample. This was due to my location, practice and familiarity with the social work community in these states. Those who did

not respond to my email inquiries for a short phone screening were also not included. Finally, once one of the *point in time* categories described above had 2 to 3 screened participants, additional inquiries from practitioners within that category were not included. Diversity of area, experience, geography, specialization and school attended may have helped to expand the contexts explored, but the heterogeneity of the sample was constrained by time, money and recruitment resources.

When individuals expressed interest in participation, I set up a short telephone screening. In the screening, I explained the purpose of the study to ensure their understanding and desire to participate. I asked them what kind of macro practice social work they were currently doing to confirm they met the definition outlined above. I also asked if they had an MSW and where the MSW was obtained. Additional demographic data was collected, such as their age, gender identity and racial identification. The sample included 12 women and 2 men. Twelve of the participants identified as white, 1 as Asian-American (Chinese), and 1 as Native American (Ojibwe). The youngest participants were 26 years of age and the oldest was 49 years of age. Three separate Midwestern MSW programs were represented. Years in practice since receiving their MSW ranged from 3 to 21 years (see Appendix B).

Narrative inquiry also challenges the researcher to work with a smaller number of individuals, but engage them in storied discourse, which requires deeper and longer conversation and interaction between the interviewee and the researcher (Polkinghorn, 1988). To ensure I could devote the time and attention to the details of my interviewees' narratives, I included two to three individuals within each of the above mentioned predetermined categories. No one in the sample with a BSW indicated they came to

macro practice during their MSW. This appears to make sense because most MSW programs allow students with a BSW to qualify for Advanced Placement. Advanced Placement shortens the time spent in the MSW program from an average of 2 years to 1 year. Research has shown students with Advanced Placement come into their program with a more focused scope of study than those who must first complete a "foundation" year of study (Limb & Organista, 2006). Those engaged in a 2-year course of study spend their first year in the programs learning about the field of social work and its professional opportunities.

Data Collection

I developed an interview guide to use with respondents (see Appendix C) based upon the literature review, research questions, and Miller's (2010) Framework. I sought additional assistance in crafting these questions from my dissertation committee as well as key informants, such as classmates in my program and national experts, such as those within the Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice. I performed two pretest interviews with the questions to refine them before beginning interviews for my research. While this preinterview work was essential, narrative interviewing requires the researcher to be flexible with the questions and prompts used based upon the experiences of the interviewees and overall tenor of the conversation.

Each participant was interviewed for 1 to 2 hours in a location of their choosing. To clarify details during analysis I followed up with participants via email. All interviews were digitally recorded. I transcribed both the trial interviews and the first interview. The additional 13 interviews were professionally transcribed. After receiving the transcription, I listened to the audio recording and followed along with the transcript

to ensure accuracy. All respondents were given a transcribed copy of the interview to ensure its accuracy and respond to the transcript and any additional input reading it elicited.

I changed all names to pseudonyms to protect the identity of the respondents. Names are powerful and represent identity, so changing a name is a serious undertaking. I chose pseudonyms alphabetically and tried to match the culture and ethnic origin of the person's original name. Any discrepancies are solely my own.

I took minimal notes during the interview, but immediately recorded my observations and reflections electronically after the interview was complete. For example, after one of the interviews I wrote,

> Date: Talking to Megan yesterday (who doesn't have a BSW) made me start thinking more about the pre-socialization stage. For *mp swers* [macro practice social workers] that is going to be quite different (I imagine) than for social workers in general. There maybe isn't much of an anticipatory socialization process ... will need to explore and parse this out more in analysis.

Qualitative research, by its very essence, requires the researcher to enter the private space of individuals and their lives (Kvale, 1996). This request for information by the researcher and the giving of information by the respondent has the potential to create an unequal, hierarchical relationship (Mishler, 1986). The lack of reciprocity by the researcher in making themselves equally vulnerable can feel exploitive. To mitigate such impacts, it is imperative the researcher acknowledges the power dynamic and is open with the interviewees about the intent and purpose of the research. Consent to participate was obtained at the beginning of the interview and interviewees were assured they could quit or refuse to answer any question at any time throughout the process. This

did not occur and most interviewees expressed enthusiasm and interest in talking about their experiences.

The purpose of the interview is not "mining interviewees for information" (Fraser, 2004, p. 6), but to "process stories along the way with participants." I would often check my interpretation or understanding of the narrative, based upon my own experience as well as that of previous theorists and research I had read. For example, in one of the conversations, the interviewee was trying to explain the difference between students in the macro practice and the micro practice track of her MSW program;

> Interviewee: I don't know. Us macro practice, we were our own little cohort within the cohort and just as indignant about the other things that everyone else was indignant about. But also, I think not so ready to be offended. I don't know how to put that better. It was so not a specific line, of course.
>
> Mary: I'm wondering. Yeah, that's really—
>
> Interviewee: We had a higher tolerance for sarcasm.
>
> Mary: I wonder too, I'm trying to unpack that a little bit. I'm wondering when you're the person that's trying to change the system, right? It might be harder to rage against the machine when you might be considered part of the machine, do you know what I mean?
>
> Interviewee: Possibly, yeah.
>
> Mary: Like righteous indignation when you don't have to actually do anything about it is very different than righteous indignation when you now feel responsibility to fix it.
>
> Interviewee: Yeah. I'm part of the system that could make the change, I've worked with Congressmen.
>
> Mary: Right, and I don't know. I'm just throwing that out. I've worked with, I know legislators. I know that even the Republicans don't eat young children, you know?
>
> Interviewee: They do care about people, yeah.
>
> Mary: And again, with your dad, a very different way of going about it.

> Interviewee: It's almost like we can see through the extreme rhetoric to these people you are raging against are not that bad. They have different opinions but they're not bad people and they're not unengageable, whereas when you're working directly with the people who are experiencing the inequalities and the marginalization—yeah, that would be a product of the despair that I know I felt working directly with people. It's just so heavy. It's easier to feel this blind anger and be sensitive to "But do you understand what my clients are going through?" Whereas in a macro setting I can say yes, I do, do you understand where that policy came from or do you understand why that law didn't pass?

This also had to be balanced with giving interviewees space to direct the narrative. Several of my interviewees would start an answer to my questions with the comment "that's a good question" which seemed to be a request for the time and space to consider their answer before responding. Acknowledging their request without "'hijacking' the conversation or foreclosing their chosen direction and focus" (Fraser, 2004, p. 185), often produced thoughtful and rich information. The following excerpt from my interview with Megan is an example of this exchange.

> Mary: What are some of the things about macro practice social work you wish you had known before you entered the MSW program?
>
> Interviewee: That's a really good question.
>
> Mary: Thank you!
>
> Interviewee: I wish I had a better context of how vast and varied it could be. Most people still don't know and we're still not allowed to call ourselves social workers unless we're licensed and doing social work in the direct sort of sense. I wish I understood how many different kinds of people could call themselves social workers— politicians, care coordinators, program managers—all the different kinds of job descriptions and job titles that could be considered social work. It's amazing. It's really amazing from the faith world to the for-profit world. I always thought it would be really cool (and I didn't know if this was a "thing" while I was in graduate school)—I worked at McDonalds doing orientation and training for brand new line employees, mostly in Spanish because I spoke Spanish—I thought these people I'm training, they need more than just what McDonalds can give them in a paycheck. I thought how cool would it be for a company like McDonalds to hire a social worker who could be available locally (not an 800 number, not an ombudsman) but a local staff person where employees

could go and say I'm struggling with this. It's not the employer's job to provide that but what a clearinghouse to reach a large number of people.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing, iterative process. Narrative inquiry must be especially flexible as the researcher explores with interviewees the meaning of their experiences. I began the analysis process prior to each interview. This required memoing of my current conceptions, ideas, and expectations. Memoing was developed as a tool for qualitative researchers engaged in Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Its purpose is to help the researcher explore their own understanding and perception of their data, especially as they become more and more immersed in the world of their participants (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). Memoing can be used by all qualitative researchers to help track their ideas, impressions and ideas throughout the process of both interviewing and analysis. I also used memoing in an effort to bracket the assumptions, feelings, or preconceived notions I might have about the participants, many of whom were more familiar to me. This allowed me more easily focus on the interview and the story being told from the respondent's experience. I repeated this memoing after each interview to ensure I captured any ideas or connections that came up during the interview.

A narrative analysis focuses on the story being told and the meaning ascribed to events in the story by the interviewee (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Because the questions of this study were developed for a better understanding of the professional socialization experiences of macro practice social workers, the three-dimensional space approach to analysis, advocated by Clandinin & Connelly (2000),

informed my approach. This approach to analysis focuses attention to three main components of the story: (a) the interactions of the individual and their environment, (b) the chronology of events, and (c) the place(s) of where the story occurs. I also relied upon the work of Fraser (2004) for line-by-line narrative analysis.

After reviewing the professionally prepared transcription for accuracy, I read the interview several times to become familiar with the story as a whole before breaking it down into particulars (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I then began to annotate the written transcript through the comments feature on Microsoft Word. I originally uploaded all the interviews into Nvivo and began coding the experiences of my interviewees through their sequence in the three stages of professional socialization: pre, formal, and post. I then broke each of these larger codes down into separate components to locate the themes developing within each stage. However, after engaging in this process, I found the number of nodes and the fragmentation of the data detracted from the coherency of the individual stories. I changed my approach based upon the suggestion by Fraser (2004) of breaking the interview transcripts into stories.

Fraser (2004) suggests looking for stories within the data by locating "a collection of lines" which make up the individual stories. After parsing out the different stories the researcher can begin to look at particular explanatory domains within the stories, such as the "intrapersonal, interpersonal, cultural and structural aspects" (Fraser, 2004, pp. 91–92). This is similar to the three-dimensional space described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Fraser (2004) also suggests naming the stories to recall the details and meaning within the specific story. Because I was especially interested in the socialization process of my interviewees I began by looking for the unique pre, formal and post-formal

socialization stories within each transcript. An example of a pre-socialization story from Catherine's interview shows one of these stories,

> Story: Family Upbringing—She's 6 going on 16
>
> Mary: Okay. Let's back up just a little bit and, as you think about your trajectory, what role do you think your upbringing, your childhood, played with your interests?
>
> Interviewee: So, my dad is a retired state trooper and my mom was a loan officer. My parents, I was always very honest, raised to be honest, and to follow (I would say) almost strict ethical standards even as a kid like your integrity was really important. I think that played a role in it, but I also, if you look at nature vs. nurture, I was just like that. My parents used to say she's 6 going on 16 and they would laugh. In high school, I didn't need anyone to say have you done your homework? I just did my homework and my parents just kind of let me flourish. They didn't feel like they had to do a lot, which was the opposite of my older sibling! I always say they were just tired by the time I came around!

After "storying" the transcripts, I looked across the stories to the similarities and differences within each stage of professional socialization. I paid particular attention to the internal characteristics participants identified were important to their socialization, such as their personality and interests; the external factors, such as family of origin, community, employment selected; and finally, the structural elements in terms of the culture, narratives, and settings in which their socialization occurred. I made note of which variables were unique to the individual and which were found across participants. Those which were found within the stories of several participants were noted and analyzed as prevalent themes.

I selected three vignettes, made up of several stories, for each stage of professional socialization to highlight at the start of each findings section. Vignettes, like case studies, can provide the reader with an in-depth look at the descriptive details of a particular experience which is then related to the broader themes which explain more

generally the process of socialization (Yin, 2014). The next chapter features these vignettes along with the common and unique elements to each interviewee's experience of professional socialization and how they conformed and deviated from the professional socialization framework conceptualized by Miller (2010).

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota on June 9, 2016. All data for this study was kept in the password protected Microsoft OneDrive on my password protected laptop. Recordings of the interviews were done through an audio recorder, but then downloaded into OneDrive and erased off of the recorder. Because follow up with respondents was be required for member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and follow up questions, I maintained the first name and preferred contact information for all subjects—email and/or phone numbers in a password protected Excel document on OneDrive. Identifying information was kept separate from the interview data. Upon completion of this study, all identifying information will be deleted.

Research Positionality

The researcher must also be willing to self-disclose their own interests and share experiences as appropriate in an effort to build genuine rapport and respect with interviewees (Mishler, 1986). As a macro practice social worker, I relied upon my social network for recruitment and some of those interviewed were friends (2), past colleagues (3), and past students (1) of mine. This undoubtedly influenced both the findings and my interpretations. It may also have influenced the kind of information shared with me during the interview. For those I had previous relationships with, we often spent the first

10 minutes or so “catching up” or talking about past events or people we both knew. This assisted in the relationship building and establishment of trust, but it also meant additional effort on my part to ensure their stories were honored, and confidentiality was maintained to the highest degree necessary for their comfort level. I used extensive memoing and member checks to ensure I wasn’t introducing my own biases into the interpretation of their stories (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). An external audit of my process was also done by my advisor to ensure my findings and conclusions were supported by the data presented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Chapter 6

Groping in the Dark: Pre-socialization Experiences of Macro Practice Social Workers

This chapter explores the Pre-socialization stage of Shari Miller's (2010) Professional Socialization model. Each of the participants shared rich and detailed accounts of their journey in becoming a macro practice social worker. While it is not possible to share these accounts completely, this section and the next two begin with a vignette selected for its portrayal of both common and unique themes regarding the particular stage of socialization experience.

The vignette of pre-socialization comes from Amber. Her story is a particularly salient narrative of the period of time Miller (2010) defines as pre-socialization, which includes the early experiences impacting both the worldview and professional trajectory of the individual. For Amber and other interviewees, themes of these early experiences included:

1. The political really is personal
2. Questioning the givens
3. Compassion for the pain of others
4. I was six6 going on sixteen16: Being a natural leader
5. Don't box me in: Wanting options and flexibility
6. There's something bigger going on

One of the challenges with applying Miller's (2010) model was distinguishing between pre-socialization and formal socialization, especially for respondents whose undergraduate degree was in social work. For example, those interviewees who pursued a Bachelor of Social Work certainly received formal socialization into the profession of

social work before pursuing their MSW. For the sake of this analysis, and my understanding of the meaning respondents gave to these experiences, I will describe only MSW-level education as formal socialization into macro practice social work. While the Bachelor of Social Work is considered a generalist degree, designed to expose future social work professionals to micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice, most participants with a BSW described their social work courses and field experiences as geared toward micro level education and direct practice experiences, which are especially highlighted by the vignette of Amber below. While some of those with a BSW had supportive instructors and macro practice experiences, the *intent* of their social work curriculum, as they described it, was not to socialize students into macro practice social work.

As defined by Miller (2010), a part of the pre-socialization process is anticipatory socialization. Anticipatory socialization is the time when an individual chooses "a reference group ... of which they are a nonmember yet aspire to belong and begin to self-socialize into that group by taking on the values and attitudes of the group as they perceive them" (p. 931). What becomes clear in reading Amber's story is both her acceptance of the "values and attitudes" of her chosen reference group (social work professors and colleagues) and her rejection of the micro focused ideology of social work education. Her story illuminates how many macro social workers struggle, sometimes in the dark, to find a place and people who will support the kind of social work practice they want to do. This support is not freely available, often hidden and at times all out discouraged. For many of the interviewees, there was no conceptualization of macro practice before choosing a major or even entering the profession.

Amber's anticipatory socialization and resistance to the more dominant frameworks offered by the profession was shared by many of the other interviewees, but also offers a unique perspective of someone who knew from an early point in her life that macro practice social work was the career she wanted. Amber's sacrifice of community, a job in macro practice social work, and her romantic partner, in order to advance her education in social work, shows a deep commitment to joining the profession of social work while resisting and overcoming a number of barriers put into place by this same profession she wanted to join. Her resilience continued throughout her story and into later stages of socialization. While many others struggled to negotiate these tensions, Amber seemed to feel them more acutely than many of the others I interviewed. Her clear articulation of these struggles made her story feel especially poignant.

Amber's Experience of Pre-socialization

Escaping the Broom Closet

Amber grew up in a small capital city in the Midwest, which she described as "a hotbed of activity for legislation ... almost more political than Washington D.C." where "most people work for the government…Or benefit highly from it." She seemed proud of her hometown, recalling the "beautiful marble white steps, where we would have our concerts, and you know, when you did pictures for dates and stuff, you'd have them at the capitol. And you just kind of soaked up all that history…" Power in her community came from holding "some high level public policy role." She explained that one of her classmates' father had a key staff position with the Governor and her aunt also worked as the Governor's receptionist. Amber's uncle was a lobbyist who "hobnobbed" and both

her aunt and uncle "were prominent Republicans." She chuckled as she said this, almost like she was slightly uncomfortable to admit her family was Republican.

> ... it's interesting too, you know, because I've heard people say they don't think Republicans and social workers can ... But you know I grew up not knowing that Democrats really existed. But I grew up with a different kind of Republicans. Republicans who had a real interest in education, and small government, sure, but you know didn't spit in Government's faces as much, you know? It was a different time and a different place.

Despite pride in her hometown, Amber described her growing up as a "crappy childhood experience." She was bullied in the fourth grade and said she didn't have any close friends and never had a "place in high school." She worked a lot and due to overly controlling parents was rarely allowed to hang out with friends or participate in social activities. She attributed her early interest in social work to these negative experiences, saying,

> I just remember thinking like, 'people are mean and I want to make the world a better place' and I think, you know, there's a better way to do things. A better way to connect with people, so, you know, they say a lot of people go into social work as a self-healing task and I think that was part of it too.

Later in the interview, when describing her close-knit group of friends and community at a small, private Midwestern University she attended for her undergraduate degree in social work, Amber shares how it was the first time in her life she felt like she had a place,

> I felt like it was kind of a nurturing program like we would have Christmas events at [a social work professor's] house ... Yeah I mean I think through my whole life that, that's the time when I really felt like this is home, this is my people, which is weird, because how did I end up making friends with all these people who had rich parents and grew up in a very different way than me? You know? And even those people are still the people that I, you know ... that I look towards, lean towards.

Going to college was never *not* an option for Amber, but neither did she receive a lot of guidance or support from her parents in making an informed decision about school or what major to choose. Neither of her parents graduated from college, and she represents the first person in her nuclear family who has graduated from college. She credits her aunt and uncle for encouraging her and amusingly recalled saying things to get a rise out of them when she was a teenager like, "I think I'll be a hairstylist," to which her aunt and uncle would say, "No, sorry Amber, you're not going to be a hairstylist" or she would say, "You know what, maybe I'll go to the local college" and they'd reply, "Nooo, you're too smart for that, you're not going to the local college." While she was expected to go to college, but didn't have a lot of guidance on what direction to take.

Growing up, Amber never really knew what a social worker was. Her school didn't have a social worker, and she didn't have any personal contact with social workers as a young person. Right after arriving to college she read an article in a news magazine touting social work as an "up and coming profession." Upon arrival to school she immediately changed her declared major from accounting, realizing it wasn't the right fit, to social work. She described her parents as "pissed," but said it made sense for her,

> Being at a Jesuit University and I was thinking yeah I really like this idea of service and you know I was just kind of fitting right into a lot of those values and ideals and I took an Intro Social Work class and I remember thinking to myself, 'Yep, this is it' like, like this is what I want to be doing, but I never really thought about doing the direct practice work, which is really interesting because that's probably more of what a lot of people thought of… but I think all along when I was taking my Intro classes I just didn't feel like those client work type tasks and roles were for me. And I always really wanted to think more big-picture.

Amber recalled learning about Jane Addams and her pioneering macro practice work. This kind of social work was very attractive to her. She said she knew she

couldn't work in a position where "I had to follow the rules and I had to be guided by the existing laws and structures. It wasn't going to be something that I was going to be very happy with." She also found the required courses of philosophy and theology and the questioning they entailed to align with her own values and epistemology.

> ... and really questioning, what does this mean? and why does this exist? and how did we get here? and do we have to live with that or can we change it? and what's our perception of things and how can we look at other people's perceptions? I don't know, I mean, I feel like that really shaped me too. You know, where I wasn't going to be satisfied with, you know, walking into an existing role and being, I don't know, being kind of caught in that ... that status quo, yeah. That wasn't going to be what I was happy with and I over the years I have had to be in some of those roles and I've been miserable. So I know and I think I knew even back then that wasn't what I wanted for my career path.

To appease her parents, Amber also double majored in Business Administration, taking several economic, accounting and finance classes. She believes these were also a good foundation for her MSW with a concentration in Administration. When asked why she didn't consider other majors, such as Political Science or Sociology, she indicated neither was practical enough and,

> I wasn't going to. I couldn't see where I would go with it, really. I found social work to be a lot more practical, a lot more hands-on learning, a lot more skills, skill developing versus sociology being a lot more philosophical ... and I really liked the social work classes ... were very self-reflective and a lot of our assignments had to be about, 'OK figure out where you're at with this topic, figure out where your background is and what prompted you.'

Amber considered Psychology, having taken it in high school, but a particularly negative interaction with a professor turned her away from it.

Despite a strong interest in pursuing social work, Amber found getting the kind of experiences she wanted difficult. She described her course work as mostly micro focused and described a strong bias in her Department toward micro practice. Her undergraduate

advisor refused to allow her to pursue a field practicum at an agency specializing in policy practice, telling her, "No you have to do a direct practice field placement… you can't do macro work without having a background in micro." Amber said she was frustrated, but went ahead and sought out direct practice experiences, thinking, "Sure, fine, I'll go through this, but that's not what I want to be doing." She worked part time at a Children's Crisis Center, became a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), and worked in a domestic violence shelter all during her undergraduate and shortly after graduating.

Amber's first social work field placement was at a United Way resource and referral line. She said she hated having to tell people "nope there's no place that can help you prevent getting evicted. Nope, there's no money left for the energy assistance. Nope there's not enough housing for you." Amber found herself constantly thinking, "Whatever those policies were I always just thought, 'no this is wrong, we need to change that.'" She said for her second placement she got "sneaky" and interviewed at a macro social work placement. However, her advisor sent her to the Salvation Army, where her office was in a broom closet. She laughed as she described it,

> I am not even kidding you. They put a little table in a broom closet, gave me a folding chair and said, "Here you go" and gave me this binder and said, "Read it" and I was like, "Really, this is my field placement?"

After being asked to meet alone, one on one with a client, when she had received no training or supervision, Amber walked out of the Salvation Army and told her adviser, "Not going back there." Her adviser finally relented and allowed Amber to finish her placement at a local child advocacy organization. Of all the experiences Amber shared, her time in this internship seemed to stand out for her as an incredibly rewarding and

positive experience. She described the Executive Director, who was not a social worker herself, as an amazing mentor whom she is still in touch with, nearly 20 years later.

> She really mentored me and, you know, kind of took me under her wing and taught me a lot about public policy and how to work with Health and Human Services ... and how to get, how to get things done and kind of command respect and partner with other organizations. I mean she's done some amazing things over the years. And I got to do all kinds of cool stuff. I got to write fact sheets for legislators on topics and I got to help write testimony for the public policy director and I got to sit in on hearings and went to [the capitol] all the time and got to watch hearings ... I helped with updating all the bills statuses and all the ones that we were following that had to do with children's issues and I just really felt like I got mentored in a beautiful way.

Anticipatory Socialization

This is not my social work stuff. Amber had hoped to stay on at her internship, but no positions were open at the time she graduated. She nannied for 6 months after graduation, knowing "this is not my social work stuff, that I want to be doing, but it was, you know, you kind of got to get a job." After that she went to work in a group home for adults with severe mental illness and said her desire to make change and do things differently got her into trouble.

> I would say things like, 'What if we took the residents to the grocery store and taught them' ... because it was in that mode where these people had been in this home for years and years and years, but the laws were going to be changing and they weren't going to be able to keep them long term anymore. And so they were going to have to be transitioning all these guys out into semi-independent living… And my director was sooo angry with me for bringing that up; so any time I tried to say, 'What if we changed this and did something different that and recognize this new whatever ...' and and she'd be like [sits up straights, changes tone of voice to one of authority] 'Amber! That would be like letting kids loose in a candy store. There is no way that we are going to.' I mean she just went off a minute. I'm just looking at her like ... and I talked to one of the other staff people afterwards and I'm like, 'whoa, you know, what was that, how did that work?' and she was like, 'Well, Amber, I think it was your tone' and I was like, 'huh'. I don't know if there was like, I questioned authority or I suggested change. Yeah I didn't last very long there either. I really couldn't deal.

Approximately 1 year after graduating with her BSW and doing direct practice, Amber received a call from the child advocacy organization where she had done her BSW internship. The organization had just received a grant they had written with Amber in mind and wondered if she wanted the job. This felt like a kind of vindication for her. Although she had spent time doing micro practice social work, she didn't feel it was the reason she was offered the position at her former internship site. It was her former work as a macro practice social work intern and maintenance of professional connections after graduation that made the difference.

Prior to her junior year in college, Amber had not considered anything beyond the 4 years of an undergraduate degree, but when she started meeting friends who had attended private schools and who had,

> Parents [who] were doctors and lawyers and so many of my friends not only had that 'you're going to college' but had that 'you're going to a professional program beyond college'…and I'm like, 'huh, well that never occurred to me, but maybe.' And then I was thinking like if I want to be a macro practice social worker I think I do need to get a professional degree to have more of those skills.

Amber learned from her social work program most graduate schools wanted students who worked for a few years before starting their MSW, but you had to return within 7 years to receive advanced standing. She thought,

> OK fine, that works for me anyway because I've got student loans ... so I decided my 3-year plan I'm like, 'I'm going to work for 3 years…' And I thought 3 years was a pretty good time frame, so I didn't get too; I didn't get out of the whole like school world too far.

Amber's process for deciding what school to attend involved looking at different websites and lists of "Top 10s" in terms of social work schools. The MSW program to which she eventually applied and was accepted was not one of her top choices, but the

one with the earliest application deadline. She found the application process so onerous saying, "I never applied to any other program." After being accepted Amber was faced with the difficult detangling of the life she had built for the past 7 years. This involved breaking up with a boy she had fallen in love with after college, who wasn't interested in moving with her ... "and that was SO hard for me because I'm like, 'Shit, I have this. I have this plan.'" The plan didn't include falling in love and this made the transition away from her chosen community and relationship even more difficult. Not surprisingly her family of origin was not particularly helpful in easing the pain of this next step in her academic journey. When asked what her parents thought of her decision to go to graduate school, she replied, with no affect,

> No interest. Didn't care. So, no, I mean while I was going through the program there was no like, 'how were your classes? what are you taking?' There was never a real interest in what I was doing. In the grad program, no interest at all. And what's interesting is when I moved ... I lived with my cousin and ... and his brother ... and then you know my aunt and uncle lived here. So, you know I had 'family' here.

It just wasn't the family she wanted.

Summary of Amber's Vignette

From the beginning of her life Amber was exposed to government as a way to solve social and community problems. At a very young age she began questioning the status quo. She cared deeply about fairness and pushed back against arbitrary rules and situations. She didn't want to be boxed in and had to be bold and persistent in order to effect change, even when it got her into trouble. Amber's childhood was more difficult than many of the other respondents, but it seems to have strengthened her commitment to the idea things can and should be made better through our own actions and self-efficacy.

This persistence, leadership and sense of personal agency were also characteristics of many of the participants in my study.

Themes of Pre-socialization

The Political Really is Personal

While Amber's story of growing up in a highly political community was unique, other respondents also reflected on their early interest or exposure to government and politics. Laura said she always had a love of politics and remembered,

> ... being really young and wanting to go like to the White House and really having this fascination with government. Running for class office to working on campaigns with my parents and going to meetings with my mom. She was like on a bunch of boards and stuff. Seeing government work and then working for my tribal government as a young person. I think I was like 14 and was working for the President's office there, fielding phone calls and figuring out how it works and then going to school.

Diane didn't have exposure to governmental institutions, but said growing up in a union household was influential in how she understood the world,

> ... and so it was very clear too that my dad's like blue-collar job and he would not have been able to send my sister and I to college without the union. And he would always tell us, the union's the reason you get to go to college. And he's basically a farmer in southern Ohio and he had all of that. So, and he also did climb telephone poles and did like line work, was a lineman. So I think in hindsight, all of those things, knowing that I came from… you know that I was really lucky. Labor was always a strong influence in my life.

While not being surrounded by politics or government as much as Amber or Laura, many of the interviewees discussed developing an interest in politics, government or social justice issues at an early age. For example, Megan recounted her high school teacher introducing her to Oscar Romero and liberation theory. Isaac remembered his high school history teacher having them read Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the World*. Nancy said she started getting into feminism and queer rights when she was 14.

Elizabeth said homelessness was something she always cared deeply about, even as a young child.

Not all of the experiences with government services were positive. Nancy's family had a difficult experience with child protection when her younger sister was born with meth in her system. She said in her small town she was completed shunned because of this incident. Both she and her brother often skipped school because of the relentless teasing and bullying they encountered. It was a particularly helpful school social worker who inspired her to finish high school and pursue social work.

Questioning the Givens

Elizabeth said her interest in social work first began when her school wouldn't allow her to bring a speaker in to discuss the AIDS epidemic. She was in eighth grade at the time and said she remembers thinking,

> They wouldn't let him come to my school. And so I couldn't tell you how I fought it but—I don't know if my mom helped or what the story was, or if it was just the teacher. But I didn't like the rules and was like 'this is ridiculous, he should be able to come' and I ended up getting him there to do a presentation.

She said it was her teacher who first told her she should be a social worker,

> Yeah, and it was interesting because it was this particular teacher who sort of put the term *social work* into my vernacular, and what that job would entail. She certainly never used the word *macro* but she talked about, my thing was wanting—I didn't like a lot of the rules. The rules didn't make sense, how do you change the rules? And so from then on I knew I wanted to go to school to be a social worker.

Frances said from fifth grade on she was always interested in knowing *why* people were homeless and *why* there was such distinct inequality between her neighborhood and the one adjoining her own,

> So it was like beautiful and wonderful and I was very lucky and I was in the city and I was also in this manicured. So literally three blocks over was the south side

> of [major metropolitan city]. I was told not to walk there, that it wasn't safe, and I was like no, these are good people. It's not "not safe;" it's just different and why is it different? Why is this block rich and that block's not? And I desperately wanted to understand that. So it's like local politics and it's poverty and it's race and institutional racism and all of this stuff. There's no easy answer but it was really the only thing that fascinated me.

Compassion for the Pain of Others

Along with this questioning seemed to be a sensitivity and compassion for the pain of others. Several respondents attributed their selection of social work as a profession because they or others identified them as having sensitive and caring personalities from an early age. Kaitlin said she "was always identified as the person who wanted to help and who was compassionate, like those were always words that were used to describe me." Elizabeth described herself as "highly sensitive" and said she used to cry as a child "because someone was eating alone in a restaurant ... Or I would feel badly for people with Down syndrome."

When I asked Diane why her sister suggested she major in social work, she said it was because,

> My sister was always in education and I think that she saw the connection to like the type of person I was as far as caring about other people and wanting to direct, like be just a good person in the world ... And of course I always deeply cared about what happened to people and that we should live in a just world.

Similarly, when I asked Megan what her family thought of her majoring in social work she said,

> They felt it fit. It did ... at the time people were like, 'oh of course, [Megan] is a giving, caring, compassionate person. That makes sense that she would want to help people', and that's all it was at the time. I want to help people and really at that point I wanted to work with the Latin American community in Minnesota connecting them to resources.

I was 6 Going on 16: Being a Natural Leader

Along with being identified as compassionate, many also said they were "natural leaders" as young children. Laura was her became class president in fourth grade and Heather joined the Air Force at age 17, immediately after graduating from high school.

Interestingly, both Grace and Catherine discussed leadership as more of an intrinsic personality characteristic than as a skill to be developed. Grace talked about being a big sister as evidence of her early leadership quality,

> I think in some ways you need to be a leader to be a macro social worker. I only have one sibling but you could say that I was the leader of him. I learned years later—I think this story is so funny—that fifth grade, eighth grade, and his senior year I was not in the same building as him and he admitted later that those were the years that he really grew! …He admitted that he waited for me to get off the bus to decide where to go. My brother's a very bright individual. He's a computer engineer, so it's not like he was clueless about the world but apparently some things! So anyway, I was a leader of him but I'm the oldest grandchild on one side. There's 13 of us. On the other side, there's 7 of us. I'm just a natural leader with my cousins. I'm used to just problem solving. Even now that we're grown, they still look to me to do stuff. It's okay. You can do it on your own!

Similarly, Catherine talked about her leadership roles as developing early and coming naturally to her,

> I think that played a role in it, but I also, if you look at nature vs. nurture, I was just like that. My parents used to say she's 6 going on 16 and they would laugh. In high school, I didn't need anyone to say 'have you done your homework?' I just did my homework and my parents just kind of let me flourish. They didn't feel like they had to do a lot, which was the opposite of my older sibling! I always say they were just tired by the time I came around!

While Elizabeth didn't use the word *leadership*, she too shared stories about taking initiative as a young person and charting her course accordingly,

> I had a group of friends that were—everyone sort of had their niche, whether it was environment or homeless in high school. So everyone was sort of focused on something. And mine was sort of that social work, but I don't have a lot of memories of doing specific things. But I knew pretty much—I think my junior

> year—that I wanted to go to [State College]. You know, I was incredibly lucky that my fall semester—and because I knew I wanted to do social work, I fought to get into social work classes my freshman year. You don't have to.

Another aspect of leadership was the number of individuals who talked about being first generation college students. Like Amber, there was a sense of pride among those who had accomplished such a task, but also acknowledgment of the challenges being the "first" brought. Both Nancy and Laura talked about their families being supportive of their academic pursuits, but not really understanding what they were doing or going through.

> Nancy: Right, so I'm first generation and I only have one other cousin on both sides of my family that has a degree. So it was just like, 'hey you want to go to college and you're going to be the first one in the family to do that? Yeah, whatever it is that you want to do, I'm sure you'll be good at it', kind of a thing.

> Laura: My family definitely because I'm like a first generation college student, so my family was definitely there. My mom and my sisters and my brother never could understand where she [referring to fellow classmate] gets it, you know. Her struggle was different than mine but we had that common piece.

Kaitlin felt her parents' lack of education also hampered her own early exposure and understanding of the world outside of her small town. This was the impetus for her desire to go to college far from home,

> I don't want to blame everything on my upbringing but like it had a huge factor on how little I knew about the world and what was out there. And my parents didn't go to college. Nobody in my family did. It was like they didn't know what was out there either. They'd never been outside—this is the same town my parents grew up in. It was very secluded.

Don't Box Me In: Wanting Options and Flexibility

This desire to not be boxed in or overly controlled also came out when respondents described knowing early they would not want a career in which they were locked into a particular position or overly structured work environment. Grace said when

she was in middle school she had thought she wanted to be a teacher, but by the time she reached high school she worried an education degree would only allow her to teach,

> I felt, for whatever reason, that it would pigeonhole me, like I was only able to do teaching with an education degree. So I ended up settling on social work after I talked with a social worker professor and I realized there's a lot of options available within the field. I liked—what appealed to me at that time was the wide variety of options available and that I didn't have to—you know, if I went into education, I'd be a teacher. It was like if I went into social work, I could do a number of things.

There was also a strong desire for practical and creative work. As we saw in Amber's story, she initially selected social work because of a news magazine article on social work as a growing profession with gainful, meaningful future employment opportunities. She did not pursue Business, Sociology, Political Science or Psychology because none offered the kind of hands-on, problem solving kind of work she wanted pursue. Similarly, Diane spoke to the applied nature of her social work training,

> …it was more of like a hands-on thing for me. Which in hindsight you know… especially in grad school, you know it's very academic work that you're doing and stuff but I don't know that she [her sister] even thought about that. But it was more… more about doing things than whether… 'cause I also thought about like you know English and like I said political science and stuff. And those just seemed a little bit more, I don't know what the word is… but in your head type stuff. And I didn't have a lot of interest in that.

The flexibility and practical nature of social work, along with being able to be active, creative and problem solve was mentioned by many respondents as one of the things they desired most in their future employment before entering formal socialization for macro practice. This will be further explored in the next section on Formal Socialization.

There's Something Bigger Going On

Even more than political involvement, nearly all the interviewees discussed being involved at young ages or seeing family members involved in volunteer work, community improvement, religious service or issues beyond themselves. Both Frances and Isaac grew up in large metropolitan areas and reported volunteering with the homeless, serving meals and helping in community centers. Heather said she is a lot like her mother who was always giving things away and helping out those in need. Grace attributed her earliest interest in helping others and being a part of community to her "Gramma." Grace who was very close to her Grandmother and described her as

> ... kind of the convener. She was the one who was running the popcorn sales for the Boy Scouts, things like that, but just had a real care for people and actually pretty progressive for her generation just in terms of her views of the world and people and people's needs. I think she had some influence on that.

Bethany said values like "empathy and focusing on not just yourself or your family were pretty integral with my family's culture growing up." Her father helped start a recycling program in their community, and Bethany herself started an "Earth Club" at a young age,

> I had an earth club that I started with some of my friends, which morphed from saving the worms after it rained on the sidewalk to actually doing, we'd rake leaves for elderly people in our community then we raised money. I can't remember how we raised money but we did have a shoe box and our ultimate goal was we were going to buy an acre of land to preserve it. It was me and my friend Janelle, probably elementary school, I don't know, fourth grade, maybe. So we started this earth club and coincidentally I actually found the shoe box a few years ago that we had put this money and it wasn't enough to buy an acre of land [chuckles] but it had, I think it had 150 bucks in there or something. So, I actually donated it to the Nature Conservancy or something. So that was something that as a kid, and I think this also probably led to some of my interest in macro practice I was always really interested in environmental work, and I still am, but I think as I've gotten older I've gotten more interested in where environmental work and social work intersect.

Elizabeth, Kaitlin, Isaac, Jacob and Megan all mentioned being connected to their church community which offered them opportunities to serve others and develop a sense of social identity. Megan reflected, "I was really involved in my church in high school. That was the social group I really identified with." While a religious institution seemed to be an important part of their upbringing, they each were intentional in discussing the conflict this created for them as they began to question and think critically about religion. Kaitlin spoke eloquently about how she navigated this tension,

> Kaitlin: Then I also—church was a really big part of my life then, so I was really active on the campus ministry, which was very supportive of more of what I would have thought of as liberal items growing up. So LGBTQ rights and yeah, just pushing a great social justice agenda where I started realizing these things were a thing. I liked that the campus ministry was a part of it because I think that helped me piece together my two lives and knowing that this is something Christians should be doing.
>
> Mary: What did your parents think of your activism?
>
> Kaitlin: Oh gosh, they still think—well, college was different because I was more active in things that they didn't agree with and I would come home. I was taking religion classes too, so it's more about the historical Jesus and telling things in the Bible that didn't actually happen—
>
> Mary: Right, more a metaphor vs. literal translation
>
> Interviewee: Exactly, and so I'm learning these things and previously I just had Bible study, right? So I'm learning this plus I'm getting active in social justice causes that they would probably be (are) on the other side of. So I'm coming home with books that say like the title has a pronoun of God for "she." They're seeing this and they're like 'what is this?!' So we got in a lot of sort of initial arguments the first few years of college, and it was mostly around religion versus the social justice. But I stopped. Now we just don't talk about it.
>
> Mary: You stopped talking?
>
> Kaitlin: We just stopped talking about it. I don't show them my books. They don't ask about it. Then when I got into my profession, I got into more international social justice. That they can get on board with because it's about food and it's about water and it's about having jobs, which they care about. But they know that I'm ... they drop hints on random things and I just choose not to

> pick it up because my whole family—I mean, there's no point in making this conversation happen because they're not going to change, I'm not going to change. Let's keep the peace.

Megan also reflected on the role of religion in her life and how she manages it with family members who have different beliefs informed by their religious views,

> I think a lot of it has to do with the way I approached it, which was to say I really appreciate where a lot of my family and colleagues come from when they don't agree. Some of them are very highly educated and some of them are not at all. I don't have to think, 'how could you believe that?' I think, 'wow, I can see why you think that. I still don't agree but that's why we have this White House that we have because there are people like you all over the country with experiences like yours that do give you a foundation for your beliefs.' It's startling. It's so startling. It's just incredible. This uncle of mine who's incredibly religious, born again Christian. So passionately conservative Christian, but so well educated. I know them [her aunt and uncle] to be incredibly passionate, compassionate, and generous. I mean, the generosity. But they have these extremely conservative views that totally betray that Christian compassion that I see in them.

As I listened to the stories of these macro practice social workers as young people, I was struck by their early rejections of the status quo. Each wanted to not only understand how the world around them worked, but how they could work on the world around them. They took initiative in both small and large ways and didn't wait for others to direct them or tell them how things "should be." Even those who weren't as bold as children, or didn't have the safety to rebel or question authority, moved into spaces which gave them this freedom as soon as they were adults. For some, like Kaitlin and Megan, this created a great deal of tension when they returned to their childhood space and had to navigate some of the values and perspectives they had begun to question and even reject.

Anticipatory Socialization: Is That a Light Switch I See?

One of the most salient themes of Amber's story was her struggle with being expected to participate in micro practice social work before she could engage in the

macro practice work she knew she wanted to do. The major themes of anticipatory socialization to emerge included:

1. Micro before macro
2. Negative anticipatory socialization
3. The lightbulb moment
4. Role models, mentors and friends
5. Forging the path
6. Choosing a graduate school

Micro Before Macro

The issue of micro before macro was explored in Chapter 2 as a systemic issue within social work programs training students to engage in direct practice prior or even in lieu of exposing them to macro practice social work knowledge and skills. This was certainly not the experience of all macro practice social workers, for example, both Isaac and Grace attended undergraduate social work programs at small Catholic universities which encouraged their interest and exploration of macro practice as an integral part of the social work curriculum. However, Grace acknowledged she'd heard this wasn't always the case,

> But also in talking to other classmates in grad school ... a lot of times they were required to do more clinical-focused practicum, which for me was surprising because what I had been told as an undergrad in my program was you just needed to have a generalist practicum, meaning that you just had to touch on the three systems. For me, I guess it was something that—I don't want to say rubbed me the wrong way, but it did. Social work is so much more than like me working with you one on one or me working in a group setting or with a family, which is what I was hearing was my peers' experience.

Elizabeth and Nancy, who attended the same undergraduate social work program, also felt they were able to explore macro practice during their BSW, but did find themselves having to ask for modifications or special accommodations from their professors. In talking about a BSW field experience, Elizabeth said, "There just weren't options, there weren't macro level options. And I didn't want to do anything that was sort of front-line clinical in nature." Nancy described the adaptations she had to pursue,

> Nancy: I was from a super super small town [State] went to [State College] for my bachelors. There was me and one other person that were even slightly interested in macro practice. Everyone was—it was very, very much like a child welfare and school social work focus of my cohort. It was difficult to try to learn more about like how I wanted to like see my profession in the future. Whenever we had research possibilities, I would kind of always ask my professor if I could branch off and do some other type of thing. As long as it hit criteria, they were always really flexible with letting me do that. But then like it was a huge change to be like not knowing where to look for an internship in the [city], period, but then also like a macro practice focus. Yeah, that was kind of, it was a lot of work! [laughs]
>
> Mary: And was it one of those things that you had to kind of find it yourself or was there help from the field director?
>
> Nancy: Honestly not a ton of help from the field director, but I have a secondary major in women's studies. My advisor from my women's studies program is from [city] so she's like here's a couple cool places that you could connect with. Then I kind of just went to like that website which led me to another website and it kind of just ended up I found my internship placement in like a really weird roundabout cold call kind of a way.

Diane also talked about her undergraduate social work program being primarily micro practice in focus. She said there were a couple of classes which focused on global social work, but she didn't remember learning about macro practice social work and it wasn't until after graduating she even knew social workers could engage in systems-level work. Unlike Amber, Diane didn't resent the direct practice focus and feels it was a good

thing which has helped to bolster her legislative and policy work. This is explored further in this chapter's section on post-formal socialization (practice).

Those who didn't receive an undergraduate degree in social work obviously weren't exposed to this kind of bias or expectation. However, this did come up again as a theme when they pursued their Master's degree and needed to take direct practice classes and were required to participate in field experiences offering direct client contact. This is explored further in Chapter 5 on formal socialization.

Negative Anticipatory Socialization

Like Amber, every one of the respondents talked about experiences leading up to their initial interest in macro practice social work, including experiences with direct practice which showed them what they *didn't* want to do, describing an almost unintentional negative anticipatory socialization. Bethany describes this well,

> I did have some direct social work experience, which was very impactful and powerful, but through that I decided that it was probably a better fit for me to focus on more macro level fixes, if you will, to some of these societal issues then working one on one with people and that revolving door of seeing the same issues over and over and over again. I had a practicum ... a placement, I worked at the [youth serving organization], which is a wonderful organization. But again, that was kind of that revolving door of seeing the same issues over and over again. So, that really got me thinking and just the toll that that kind of work had on personally ... emotionally and physically. I felt like I could best utilize my strengths and my passions and probably my mental health too, and my life balance by having more of a macro and focusing on those same issues, but preventing them from happening to begin with.

The Lightbulb Moment

While some individuals described finding macro practice social work through their discomfort with direct practice, most recalled a very specific moment in time when they "found" macro practice social work. The way they described it reminded me of the sudden illumination of a lightbulb in the darkness. They described searching for

something they thought might exist, but until its discovery, they had no conceptualization of what it was they were looking for. There was also a sense of serendipity involved in their discovery. Nancy recounted her first moment of discovering macro practice social work,

> So I pretty much figured out that I wanted to be a social worker when I was 14. Around that same time, I was starting to get into social justice movements and learning about feminism and queer rights and things like that. I never saw the connection between those two things. So I always thought that activism and things like that were something you just do outside of your work, like it's just an add-on. I graduated high school, went on to college, and I was in like my first semester of my social work degree, like after I had done all my generals, and was introduced to community organizing. It was kind of like a mind-blowing moment of, "You mean I can get paid for this? I can do this? Like yeah, that's what I want to do!"

Diane used remarkably similar language to Nancy to describe her first realization of macro practice social work,

> …I started doing direct practice social work and ended up as a case manager, like a Medicaid waiver case manager. So I really got to understand the broader systems that we work in like Medicaid, you know the counties and all that. And then I met a woman who had LGSW or LSW after her name on her business card and she was a lobbyist and that blew my mind. And then I started talking, she set me up on an informational interview and just from there that I figured out like, oh wow…like I started thinking about grad school. I knew I wanted to go to grad school and realized that you can go to grad school to like this other side of social work and politics.

Kaitlin discovered macro practice social work after talking to a friend who was getting her Master's in Social Work. Kaitlin's undergraduate degree was in Communications, Religious Studies and Linguistics. After completing her degree, she was unsure of what her next step would be,

> One of my friends from undergrad who was in psychology was now getting her Master's in social work at that point, and she and I got together for a weekend. I was going over all of what I want to do in life. This is where I want to be but I'm working at a car dealership right now. I don't want to do this, right? I told her all

> the things I wanted to do and she said, 'all of those things are social work.' It's like oh, well, social work. Okay, that gives me a route to look into. So then I went home and I actually just googled "international social work" and some things came up. I'm like, 'it's a thing!' So I looked into it. This sounds really—I don't know, almost embarrassing—but I don't think I learned about macro practice. The first time I remembered learning about macro practice was when I was filling out the application for the U of M. It said, "Which track do you want to do—macro or micro?" I think it gave a description and I was like well, yeah, macro.

Like Kaitlin, Jacob was interested in doing work internationally. He was involved in relief efforts and other international community development initiatives through his church, but professionally he was a scientist. Wanting to make a career change he began talking to members of his church, one who was a social work professor, and through these conversations discovered social work had a macro practice component to it, something he had never known before. Knowing social work offered a professional avenue to doing the kind of international work he was passionate about, Jacob decided to pursue his Master's in Social Work.

Models, Mentors, and Friends

As we can see from the above stories, another common thread through many of the interviewees' discussions of their transition from pre-socialization to anticipatory socialization was presence of role models, mentors and friends which helped guide individual understanding of macro practice social work. This is a theme which emerges in subsequent stages of professional socialization as well. Interestingly, not all of these significant influences were social workers themselves. For example, in Amber's story it was the Executive Director of a children's advocacy organization who acted as a strong mentor who taught her how to do policy work, advocacy, grant writing and community organizing. For Elizabeth, it was a middle school teacher who put her on to the path of

social work, although later it was her undergraduate social work professor who used the term *macro practice*. Isaac also mentioned his high school history teacher as an early influence, introducing him to antiauthoritarian readings and sparking his initial interest in social justice issues. Nancy shared it was her Women's Studies advisor who helped her find a macro practice field placement for her undergraduate social work degree. Kaitlin and Megan both said it was friends already getting their MSW who first suggested they pursue macro practice social work. For both of them, these friends were clinically oriented, but recognized social work had a place for those more interested in macro practice.

For Diane, it was the MSW lobbyist she met while doing direct practice who opened her up to the possibility of doing social work at a macro practice level, Diane also talked about her father's influence in her ability to understand larger systems and their impact on individuals,

> Yeah, my upbringing and my dad didn't know that he was priming me for that at all. Like I definitely have done more education of him now on those issues that he sort of intuitively knew then but didn't know there was another position out there.

Forging the Path

Amber's experience of starting out in more direct service positions immediately after completing an undergraduate degree was the most common trajectory described, although not universal. While each of the interviewees took a different path, they all ended up pursuing an MSW in an effort to address the inadequacies they saw in the larger systems. For example, Laura's path was the opposite of Amber's. She started by doing policy consulting work directly after her undergraduate degree (in political science), but

then moved into child protection for a tribal human services department. She later was promoted to supervisor. Grace joined AmeriCorps and worked in a youth-focused program where she had the chance to do community organizing and was responsible for organizing a large community event around the issue of human trafficking. Bethany and Megan also joined AmeriCorps shortly before starting their MSW, but their service was working directly with children and adolescents.

Isaac and Kaitlin both spent time abroad after their undergraduate. Isaac joined the Peace Corps where he did community development and grant writing in Moldova. Kaitlin spent a year in India through a church program, teaching English to children,

> So I was teaching English in a primary school poorly, and I feel terrible about it. I was like a very bad teacher. But it was fun and we had a great time learning songs and skits. Then I was also just visiting people who were at an orphanage and an elderly women's home. So just more what they call the ministry of presence.

Jacob was the only person interviewed who did not have prior professional social service experience before starting the MSW. He had worked as a mechanical engineer for 14 years and going back for an MSW was done to change careers.

The rest of those who worked in between their undergraduate and MSW programs had experiences similar to the one described by Frances,

> I got a job supervising people with behavioral health issues in the workplace, me washing dishes in the [organization] workroom so that I started out where everyone starts out, in a job where people last for 4 months and then move on. So I did get a job at [organization] here eventually and that's when I realized—I don't know if you want to put this in, but that's when I realized that organizations matter. How they're run matters. Who your boss is matters. That's when I got the job for senior case management of like let's just get out of it. Let's just be behind a desk. Maybe that's what I need. Again, it was like no, that's not what I need. I need to find a good organization doing what I want.

From her position with senior case management Frances went directly to her MSW program. Most of the respondents who did micro practice work described, like Frances and Kaitlin, how it was these experiences working directly with people one on one that helped them recognize the need for addressing inadequacies in the larger systems surrounding the people they were trying to serve. As Kaitlin was discussing her time in India she reflected,

> I think that also would have been in India because I was meeting one on one but I saw a bigger issue. So I see your problem but it's because of this thing and how do we change this thing? You don't have access to food. You don't have access to education. You don't have access to water. Yeah. But I wouldn't have had those words at that time either. But I knew it inside. Once I was given those words, I could piece them together.

Megan, who had been considering an advanced degree in education, changed her mind after her AmeriCorps experience,

> So I was doing an AmeriCorps year teaching at an alternative high school in [City] as I was thinking of pursuing a Master's of education and decided that teaching just wasn't really for me. I found it just heartbreakingly discouraging, these kids that I was working with at this school that was really under the radar. It was part of [City]. It's still existing today somehow, but the kids just broke your heart. I mean, pregnant at 13. It was so out of my realm of comprehension, the families or nonfamilies and communities these kids were coming from. To pile on top of that just overwhelming sense of despair was a really unsupportive staff at the school. I had my own classroom for 2 hours every day and I just didn't know what to do with these kids. I just was not skilled at curriculum building and I should have asked for more help, of course, but I had no idea that at the outset I would just be sort of set ... The lunchroom would be in absolute chaos and the principal would lean back and say well they come from chaos. We know that's what they expect, so that's what we give them here. I was absolutely appalled. Absolutely appalled.

The desire to engage in change at a macro level, after disappointing work in direct service, was a common experience for nearly all the participants. Elizabeth's comments encapsulate this theme well,

> And I was a retention specialist, they had those back in the day so it was my job to keep people in their job. And so quickly started figuring out like 'how do you do this right'? There's not resources to do this. Who writes these rules? And I actually figured it out at the state. Yeah. At DHS. And then pretty quickly was like 'well I think I could do your job, I think I'd probably do it better. What did you do, and how did you get your job?' And then that was that. It was like every other step was like 'I want that job.'

Choosing a Graduate Program

Because I have chosen to categorize MSW education as formal professional socialization into macro practice, the time between completing an undergraduate degree and choosing an MSW program represents the clearest expression of anticipatory socialization. Unlike in Amber's situation, most respondents chose their MSW program based upon the recommendation of friends, the school closest to them geographically, the least expensive, and the most flexible in terms of their work and life schedules. Very few of them did extensive research or applied to more than one or two programs.

The influence of relationships: My niece was just born. Unlike Amber, several of the interviewees chose their graduate school based upon desire to stay in their current location or to be close to partners or family. Kaitlin had been offered a scholarship to an MSW program on the east coast, with a specialization in international social work, but turned it down to attend a program closer to where she was living and working,

> I was specifically looking for places that had international focus. Of course, the University of Midwest at the time didn't. I think they might now. So the University of West Coast and the University of East Coast, and I got into the University of East Coast. Then the University of Midwest just because it was close. I knew a lot of people here. Then I got into the U of Midwest so that made my choice down to two. I still don't know what it was that made me choose the University of Midwest, but I think it was because it was close and I had just had a niece who was born. That really affected it. But University of East Coast was going to give me a scholarship and now I'm real mad about it because—every month, I'm like what?! I should have went to University of East Coast. [laughs] Yeah, that was dumb.

In a similar way, Isaac chose the MSW program he did to appease his partner. He had been in the Peace Corps for 3 years and his partner "made it clear she had waited 3 years for me and so I better return and be close to her."

Megan said her decision to apply to the MSW program was based on hearing about the program from a friend,

> One of my friends at the time had just wrapped up the advanced placement program at the University of Midwest. So, she had just finished her MSW and I had really enjoyed hearing about the program and her experience and the kinds of work she was doing, so I thought I'm going to apply. It was so on a whim and so not researched, and I didn't even visit the campus. I just applied. I got in and thought okay that's what I'm going to do. I had no Plan B.

Later in the interview Megan said she did consider other private schools, but the cost and clinical focus of the MSW programs in her area lead her to the program her friend had attended,

> I appreciated the weight of a [large] institution behind me and it was the cheapest, to be completely honest, and it was where my friend had gone, so it felt safe. Yeah. And my dad went [there].

The cost was just insane. Like Megan, many of the respondents mentioned cost as being one of the primary considerations in the program they chose. Nancy expressed being surprised at how expensive graduate school was and the lack of financial support available,

> The cost [of other programs] was just insane. Don't get me wrong, the [State University] cost is also insane. But the thing that they don't tell you is you can't take out grants in grad school. I mean, my family growing up was very poor, so my whole undergrad was paid for by grants. I was like yeah, of course I'll go on and do more and it was like, 'psych, you need to take out all these loans', and I didn't know that.

Francis said she intentionally waited until she had residency before applying to the state university's MSW program. Despite other options not requiring residency, she

wanted an affordable option in a program offering a macro practice concentration. She also attributed her decision to return to school to the federal loan deferment program,

> Thanks Obama, with the—what's it called, the service deferment? I wouldn't have gone back without that either. So the fact that the government is included in that and I'm able to kind of think of my career path moving forward as I made a decision. I'm going to work in a nonprofit or government agency for 10 years, and that felt good too.

It's close and flexible. Along with cost, another significant consideration for choosing an MSW program was its convenience, both in terms of location and scheduling. The majority of individuals were working before they applied to their MSW program and wanted to continue working at least part or full time. This required attending school in the place they lived and programs offering flexible class schedules. For example, Laura chose a part-time MSW program while also supervising a large federal juvenile justice program,

> The attraction was that it was geared towards students that were working. The Saturday classes. I didn't mind the 4-year time frame. It was about a 40-minute drive from me.

Similarly, Diane said her choice boiled down to,

> ... [School] fit my schedule, cause I knew I wanted to, I needed to keep working fulltime and and I kind of liked the smaller school. I had come from a big university, it was close to my house…it was all very like logistical things that made sense. And so that's really how I ended up there and ended up in the program was just 'cause that's how life worked out.

It was always the macro program. Along with external factors of location, cost and schedule, nearly all the respondents intentionally chose their program because it offered a concentration in macro practice social work. For Frances and Grace, "it was always the macro program." Bethany applied to two schools with strong macro practice social work specializations. When she didn't get into the first one where she was living

on the West Coast, she moved back to the Midwest to attend the MSW program where she was accepted. She says this was a good decision for her and the Midwest program ended up offering a stronger macro practice curriculum,

> In hindsight I'm actually really glad because from what I understand the University of [state she attended] has a better dual degree program. And I think probably a better macro practice program then the University of [West Coast].

Diane and Jacob both said they considered other professional degrees, but when they discovered an advanced degree in social work would allow them to combine their interest in systems and policy work with a value base in serving vulnerable populations they were convinced social work was the right path. Diane reflecting this decision said,

> Well I always knew I wanted to go to grad school. But I didn't know necessarily… I wasn't totally convinced I think I wanted to go into social work. But once I figured that I could do social work and public policy and macro practice, I was conv ... I knew that that was what I wanted to do.

Analysis of Pre-socialization Findings: Serendipity Achieved

This section explored the pre-socialization experiences on macro practice social workers, including their anticipatory socialization into the profession. It is clear participants in this study had a variety of early life experiences, but there were also some common patterns which may have influenced their attraction to macro practice social work. For most of the interviewees' exposure to government, politics and community involvement were key elements. Seeing the intersection of government and politics along with community involvement in the solving of social problems had an impact on how they saw their world and their particular place within it. For most of those I talked to, government and community were positive forces which could be wielded to bring about positive outcomes. However, for others, such as Nancy, government involvement

also caused additional problems and acute stress for her family. Wanting to improve these systems for others was especially important for her.

Along with the external environment, many also described intrinsic qualities they felt contributed to their interest in social work and eventually macro practice. According to their families, pursuing the profession of social work seemed to make sense for their personality. The paradox is none of them are doing the kind of social work their families envisioned—working directly with people to promote better individual functioning. Along with the caring aspect, several people said they also had leadership qualities from an early age. The combination of empathy and desire to help people, along with wanting to guide, motivate and direct others made a career in macro practice social work especially appealing. When asked why they didn't pursue other undergraduate majors such as sociology, psychology, or political science the lack of practical application and overly theoretical nature of these studies was mentioned. While supporting programs or classes in these areas were seen as valuable, they weren't necessarily viewed as leading to a fulfilling career.

The piece of pre-socialization I found most interesting was the consistency with which interviewees described the questioning they did as young children. Nearly all of them talked about recognizing injustice or unfair rules at very young ages. They seemed to push against rules and structures which they didn't think made sense or targeted vulnerable populations. Making sense of these inequities seemed vitally important and the answers they received from adults around them woefully inadequate. Coming across texts, movements, or people who also challenged the status quo was instantly attractive to them. Within their undergraduate degrees, whether it was social work or something else,

all of them chose to explore these questions through involvement in campus organizations, minor programs, elective courses, or community involvement.

Many of the interviewees also talked about their desire, at very early ages, to be involved in some kind of social change, but had no framework for what that would look like for them professionally. Social work, while certainly an established and known profession, is not one commonly promoted by dominant U.S. culture. Finding a professional framework for their social change ideals was described by several people as "mind blowing."

This "discovery" was often aided by role models and mentors who knew about macro practice social work and connected the individual with the profession. This is a critically important finding when considering the future of the profession of social work and the role of macro practice within it. As I will describe in the section on post-formal socialization, many macro practice social workers do not identify as a macro practice social worker when talking to others, either personally or professionally. This means one of the key ways young people may learn about this opportunity within social work is not being realized, or occurs only by happenstance. Developing a more visible identity within mainstream culture is suggested in Chapter 7 as one way to grow the number of professionals who consider macro practice social work.

After finishing their undergraduate experience, nearly all of the interviewees had some work or volunteer experience with direct practice. While some of them found this to be a helpful and insightful experience, many of them found it to be exhausting and demoralizing. Personal and existential discomfort with serving people at a micro level was one of the key reasons many chose to pursue macro practice social work.

It's also interesting to note how concrete and specific individuals become when exploring an advanced degree in macro practice social work, as the next section entails. While discussion about their younger years and undergraduate experiences were more about exploring their philosophical and vocational interests, by the time they chose their graduate degree, there was a stronger sense of practicality. It is possible these practical considerations along with a growing sense of marginality may have led to disappointment with their MSW education during the formal socialization stage.

Chapter **7**

Choosing Marginality: Formal Socialization of Macro Practice Social Workers

Diane's narrative of her experiences during her MSW training was the chosen vignette for this section on formal socialization. Like Amber's story, Diane's account captures a number of themes similar to other interviewees, while also offering a unique perspective on her educational journey. These themes included:

1. Role models and mentors
2. Faculty support of macro practice
3. Role of adjunct faculty
4. Tension between micro/macro cohorts
5. MSW classes
6. Internship
7. Transition to post-formal practice

Drawing from Miller's (2010) framework, formal socialization for macro practice social work is operationalized in this study as the time during which interviewees completed their MSW program. For all the interviewees, except Catherine, the MSW represented a time when they specifically sought the training needed to engage in macro practice social work. While social workers can practice with an undergraduate degree in social work, the MSW allows for advanced, and in most cases, specialized practice.

Diane's Experience of Formal-socialization

Diane decided to pursue macro practice social work after she had completed her BSW and worked for several years in the social work field as a Medicaid case manager. She was an especially motivated and disciplined student who worked hard to get the most

out of her education. She appreciated the content of her MSW classes; although she thought more attention to critical thinking and challenges of the predominant liberal bias would have been helpful. Diane found her macro practice internship experience integral to her future social work practice. Unlike many of the other interviewees, she was not especially close to her cohort and often found them to be less motivated to take responsibility for their own learning and professional development. She did perceive tensions between her cohort and those in the MSW clinical concentration. Diane felt the other clinical practice students had less respect or understanding of the important role macro practice played in the profession; while she had great respect for what both micro and macro social workers bring to the table. As a policy director and adjunct professor at the school she got her MSW from, Diane often finds herself explaining this value to current MSW students in both cohorts.

After meeting a lobbyist whose business card had the letters *LSW* after her name, Diane immediately started considering social work graduate programs. The school she chose was close to her home, offered a macro social work track, as well as a flexible class schedule, and allowed her to continue working full time.

It's Not My Job to Spoon Feed You the Information

Diane noticed immediately her view of graduate school was different from her classmates. She credits her previous work experience as preparing her to take graduate school more seriously and take it upon herself to make the most of her time in school. Her classmates on the other hand would often complain about instructors, or useless readings, blaming the class and not taking responsibility for their own learning,

> I remember them acting, being like, oh I didn't get anything out of that class. That class sucked, blah, blah, blah. And I was like, 'well the instructor sucked but I still learned a lot, because it was on me.' So, I just felt like for graduate school you gotta be in a different mindset. Which is why I think, when possible, students should take a break between bachelor and graduate school, and get some of that world, you know broader sense of the world type of thing. So, I don't know… I was always far more frustrated with my fellow students than I was with the instructors.

As an adjunct instructor now in the same school she attended, Diane said this attitude informs her approach with students: "I'm not gonna spoon feed it to you, the readings are here for a reason. Like if you are frustrated with… like you need to do the work. It's not my job to do the work and spoon feed it."

Diane said there was only one instructor she could legitimately complain about. The instructor was an adjunct whom she liked personally, but never seemed prepared or organized. No amount of self-directed work seemed to help her better understand the content of the course. When I asked Diane if she thought part of the problem was because the instructor was an adjunct she said she had a real mix of instructors; some of her adjuncts were fantastic and she didn't see a qualitative difference between adjunct and full-time instructors.

Relationships Are Key

Despite working full time and going to school, Diane said she always got good grades. She had to be organized and highly structure her time. She said "all-nighters" and procrastination simply weren't options for her. "I'm a nonfunctioning person after 10 p.m.…like I cannot do that, my brain doesn't work that way." She also made sure she was networking and keeping an eye on the professional options available for after she graduated.

> I had a fellow Master's… fellow macro social workers I went through this with, who ended up doing micro practice social work, not micro, whatever… direct-practice social work, because they couldn't find a macro position. And so they felt sort of screwed, like they couldn't get the clinical hours and they had to go back and take more classes. But that was the… like I also graduated and I don't think they did a lot of informational interviews. Like they didn't put themselves out there in this different way that I did. Like when I got my job it was because I had like three people who I did informational interviews with send me the email and be like, 'hey this position just opened. I know you're interested in this', but I wouldn't have met them… now they're my friends. But it's like… I don't know you gotta take responsibility for yourself, put yourself out there. I mean as a person of privilege I can say that, like I had those connections, so…

Is Macro Real Social Work?

Diane also found tensions within her program between those who were direct and macro practice. She strongly believes both are critical to effective practice, micro informing macro and vice versa, but sometimes felt like the direct practice students didn't believe macro practice was "real" social work,

> ... like I remember the internships and things being far more like hands-on, direct-practice social work, which in my opinion, I think is a good thing. Because I feel like having that direct-practice experience absolutely has informed everything I've done in macro practice. So I was always really frustrated by that like, idea that somehow we weren't doing social work, when in fact, the direct-practice folks needed us to be able to see that forest through the trees. We needed them to tell us how it works on the ground and to see the impact …

Diane said her MSW education was integral to her becoming a macro social worker, saying she wouldn't have her current position as policy director at a large nonprofit without the benefit of her education. She said it helped her understand how high-level systems operated and how they impact the people they are meant to serve. She was quick to say it wasn't the "in-the-weeds" details of specific programs like Medicaid or Social Security, but how the systems were created, how they can be altered and the role power and privilege play in service provision.

The election of Barak Obama as president of the U.S. also occurred while Diane was in graduate school and this was a large part of the discourse in her classes. Despite good conversations about power and privilege, Diane feels more conversations about race would have been beneficial,

> We were still a classroom full of white kids primarily. More sort of interactive you know, make you uncomfortable type work that you need to grow. I think we could stand more of that ... and getting people to the place to know that they don't understand privilege. Something more of that would've been good.

She also believes teaching MSW students to use a more critical lens for examining and discussing social issues is necessary for future macro social work.

> I used to be far more of a knee-jerk liberal, but this job has really brought me more ... I would say I'm definitely more left of center ... And I think I ... I think grad school sort of solidified that knee-jerk liberalism ... And I mean the instructors are pretty much all lefties ... which is fine, but not necessarily ... it doesn't necessarily prepare you for the real world and the fact that you're gonna have to work with people who did not subscribe to the same view that you do ... and if you want to get to them and maybe change their mind, you need to understand where they're coming from. And that wasn't necessarily something I learned ... I didn't learn that in grad school. In grad school it was all social justice, blah, blah, blah ... which I think are, like excellent underlying frameworks to approach the world that this is how it should be. But then you have to be more realistic and pragmatic about why maybe some other people have different views ... you may disagree 98% of the time with somebody but that 2% might be the thing you need to work on with them ... they may have a sister who is extremely mentally ill and ... they are super pro-crisis services because she committed suicide ... Whatever. But you don't know and if you don't take the time to get to know them and, you know, try to tease some of that out because you just had a knee-jerk reaction about them, then you've missed a great opportunity. So, that I did not learn from grad school, for sure.

Having a BSW allowed Diane to waive several classes, such as history of social welfare and foundations of social welfare policy. Because of the condensed nature of her MSW program, there wasn't enough time for her to take a lot of additional courses. She said she wished there was more time for her to take clinical courses, especially those

related to brain development and developmental psychology. She believes they are critical to systems work and how different systems "interact with different levels of development."

Field: "The Best Experience Ever"

Diane's main interest as a graduate student was in public policy, but she feels she has learned more about policy "on the ground" than she did in graduate school. She said she wishes there had been more hands-on work, like her MSW field practicum, with a nonprofit advocacy organization. She described the internship as the "best experience ever." She gained experience in policy and program development "better ... than the class I had for sure." The internship gave her a sense of confidence and taught her she already had the skills and talent to be an effective lobbyist. She knows it was her work with this organization which lead to her current position. Reflecting further on what she learned through her internship and subsequent work, Diane said she was surprised to find the political system so incredibly accessible, only requiring her to show up and engage in the process,

> You can't control everything. It's about working with different personalities and again like being flexible with the ambiguity. And the other thing it also taught me too is, okay if something doesn't work, do something else. You know don't get caught up in the fact that like what a bummer it is that you didn't pass XYZ, cause there's next year. And like when I talk to social workers [who say] that feels scary, like they don't… like the clinical social workers, that's when people are like, "Oh you're so smart about these things." No, it's just like, you just do it. It's just like the way you show up to an appointment with a client…that terrifies me. Give me a legislator, let me introduce some legislation, let me do that. I'm more than comfortable with that.

Themes of Formal Socialization

While Diane's first role model for macro social work occurred before her MSW program, once she had this encounter she deliberately and intentionally pursued

educational and professional macro social work. Diane was internally motivated to do this work, but these prospects weren't always made readily apparent by the institution. Many of the respondents talked about feeling like a second thought or "add-on" by their university. Having role models and mentors was mentioned as being critically important to their development of a macro social work skill set and identity, but often these individuals were adjunct faculty, non-social workers, or other classmates. No interviewee who had a macro practice concentration during their MSW thought it was a particularly robust, well organized or highly valued specialization by the Department, administration or other clinical students.

Role Models and Mentors

Half of all the respondents talked about faculty serving as role models for their future macro practice. Frances and Laura both said faculty who had macro practice experience were helpful to them in understanding what being a macro social worker meant. Frances said her professors, classes and classmates all helped her understand,

> ... what it meant to be a macro practice social worker and creating a niche in our world for us. So I feel like without that, I would have not understood that it's okay to not get your license in social work. It's okay to not do direct service and still identify as a social worker. And it's okay to be interested in international policy and social work. And it's okay to say housing is your niche when that's not clinical and that's not case management.

Megan credited one of her macro social work instructors for igniting her interest in macro social work and helping her determine to pursue a macro social work concentration,

> So, I started the 2-year program and right away at the beginning of that semester realized that this direct practice stuff, this therapy groups, it was just not for me. But I didn't really have time to panic because in the meantime I was feeling really engaged by [Instructor]'s [macro social work course] and just really starting to

> understand what political advocacy, grassroots organizing and all that, was, and also nonprofit management, which I felt would really capitalize on my skills well.

Amber talked about the opportunity during her MSW to do an independent research study with a macro social work faculty whom she said, "was trying to strengthen the macro component of the program at the [university she attended]." Her research involved interviewing macro practice social workers which allowed her to see the kind of work being done in the field and the kind of positions macro social workers could consider.

Interestingly, many of the specific faculty mentioned by name were not full-time tenure track, but adjunct, professors. When asked what it was about these faculty they found helpful, the interviewees recalled the practical macro social work these faculty had done along with their focus on learning skills applicable to macro social work practice. Bethany recalled an adjunct faculty, who was a lobbyist, who taught her "how things work at the legislature and we did bill tracking." Isaac said he didn't utilize MSW faculty as much as he should have, but enjoyed several classes taught by macro social work adjuncts. He said he learned a lot from a particular adjunct who shared his professional experiences as a "hatchet man," having had experience firing a lot of people. Isaac said he didn't realize it at the time, but a lot of this faculty's stories were about the way administration and power acted and the bad things that happened in the professional world. This proved to be helpful to Isaac in his future macro social work practice in labor as he negotiated power at the legislature on behalf of the union members he represented. Likewise, Grace said,

> The faculty I think I resonated the most with were not professors; they would be like adjunct. So, people who still currently worked in the field or had spent the

> last 20 years working. The two that I'm thinking of didn't have degrees in social work but they had a great knowledge of this is how the world works; and this is what you're going to face if you're doing x, y, or z. The practical knowledge was really valuable to me ...

A number of those interviewed said they appreciated classes with guest speakers who were currently working as macro social workers. Bethany said she especially appreciated a panel of macro social workers one of her classes used,

> ... they had a panel of macro practice social workers come in to talk about what they were doing and that was very helpful, because again I think they were people that were able to talk about what they were doing and I was kind of like, 'huh, I never thought about pursuing x, y, or z' ... and I'd say in macro practice and direct as well, hearing what people were actually doing was helpful ...

Several respondents also talked about the influential role their internship supervisors had in their understanding of macro social work. Bethany said her macro social work internship supervisor was "fabulous ... a really obviously great inspirational person to talk to." Nancy reflected on having both a social work and task supervisor who had social work degrees and were doing macro practice work,

> I worked with somebody that I—there are certain people in the field that you look up to, you know, and so I got to work with one of those people: [Name], who is the planner for [Name of program]. Then I also got to work with [Name] who was the lobbyist for [Name] County. Even though they weren't my licensed supervisors, they both had social work degrees. So it was very cool to see them doing macro practice with a social work degree.

Jacob shared how his internship supervisor was also responsible for recruiting him to his current position and someone he admires a great deal for her leadership and macro social work practice. Similarly, Laura's internship supervisor was secretly "grooming her" for her position and taught her about budgets and how to lead a social services agency.

Kaitlin also mentioned her MSW internship task supervisor, who did not have a social work degree, as someone from whom she was able to gain valuable policy experience: "Yeah, she was really great. I invited her out ... and sold her on how I could be an intern and talked about how applicable this MSW was. So she was really great at advocating for me ..."

Similar to Kaitlin, other interviewees talked about the opportunity to work on different projects or paid employment during their MSW with non-social workers doing work they themselves were interested in pursuing. Isaac talked about attending his local precinct caucus and becoming involved with a particular political candidate who gave him the opportunity to run a political campaign. Amber stated some of her greatest learning came from her position in the county planning department. Amber worked there as part of a work–study program and said she benefited from their "expertise and ... leadership ... much more than any class I took or any project I worked on during the [MSW] program itself." Frances described the attorney she collaborated with as part of her MSW internship,

> So me and this lawyer had this really 'aha' moment of, like, we are bringing different things to the table. We should both go talk to this woman because we're just hearing different things. We're asking different questions. I don't know why but that was kind of a powerful thing.

Like Diane, for Elizabeth, key social work role models played an important part in her pursuit of an MSW in macro practice social work. Elizabeth also talked about the presence of classmates who helped her discover the path she wanted to take and the skills she needed to develop while in school. For example, during an Open House at the university she attended for her MSW, Elizabeth mentioned several people who told her,

> '... oh, yes, you, you're a dual degree.' I'm like 'what do you mean?' They're like 'you're doing a dual degree. Like this [an MSW] isn't enough.' Just from the talking and what we did, they're like 'you have to do a dual degree.' And I had never even heard of it until that point.

These same classmates also told Elizabeth to pursue being a child welfare scholar which helped her pay for graduate school and allowed her to develop key relationships with policy leaders within the school and in the community.

Along with her first macro social work course and instructor, Megan also realized it was the people in her MSW cohort who were doing macro social work that she wanted to learn from and emulate,

> So right away I realized that I was going in that track. The people I had started surrounding myself with were also doing that. So I kind of just like tacked myself onto their bandwagon and I was like, 'yeah me too!' I spent a lot of time learning from, just latching myself onto other people who knew much more than I did. Classmates who had more experience. I was so green. I was so green. I tell people half of what I paid for… was access to my classmates, which is why going to class was so important to me because I knew I was learning just as much if not more from the discussions in class and engaging with people who were so different than the people I had previously interacted with.

Nancy also found her classmates helpful in providing a context for what macro social work looked like in the professional world,

> I felt like a lot of them had really cool experiences doing macro practice already, so to hear about stuff that they've done, it's always been kind of difficult for me because I'm used to being the youngest person in the room. So, most of the people that I went to school with from MSW were only a couple of years older than me, so that was really nice. I knew that they were people who were young and were still going out and doing awesome macro stuff. I felt a real connection with that.

For Diane, her cohort wasn't necessarily a group of people she highly depended upon to make sense of her graduate school experience or her professional identity. If anything, Diane seemed to see herself as somewhat separate from her younger, less experienced classmates. However, the MSW cohort did play a significant role in the

modeling and sense of macro social work identity many of the interviewees developed during their MSW program.

Faculty Support of Macro Practice?

Knowing the importance of faculty in the formal socialization process, and my own desire to be an effective macro social work faculty, I specifically asked, "How did faculty support your interest in macro practice?" Amber's response to this question was rather emphatic,

> A: They didn't.
>
> M: Okay, No, no, not even one person stand out in your mind?
>
> A: No. I mean my advisor was [Name], but I really found her to just be someone who would sign my sheet when I had to sign it.
>
> M: Right
>
> A: And I didn't, she didn't really look over at my schedule that I proposed and say, 'oh well have you considered this' you know, or 'is this really what you want?' or 'how are you gonna ...?'

Elizabeth's response to my question was remarkably similar to Amber's: "I don't know that they did at all. I think [Name] was a good advisor, I mean in terms of you had an advisor for the [program]." Kaitlin's response was somewhat noncommittal,

> I don't know either way on that one. I think [Name] would have fit that role but she was my advisor and I chose her because of her macro practice and she had some international background. She was helpful in talking through some of those things and helping me identify—oh, you know who else? [her field liaison] Yeah. Yeah, I forgot about [Name]. She was helpful in discerning a few things too, so yeah, I don't know.

Jacob also thought his advisor and other faculty were "helpful to a certain point." He said they acknowledged his interests, but were "only able to do so much in terms of course requirements." Frances, while generally positive about her MSW experience, did

express some frustration with the approach faculty took in preparing students for macro social work positions. In reflecting on the panel of macro social work professionals one of her instructors brought in,

> The one thing I will say about the school is it made me feel like I was never going to find a macro social work job. It felt very elusive. It felt like the panel of like everyone struggled to find that position, right? I just remember there was this one girl that was in the [macro social work position] and she was really happy. She was talking about how happy she was. [Instructor] kind of interrupted and was like, 'but it took you awhile to get there, right?' ... and it was just like I remember that moment. Okay, this girl's happy but her professor remembers the struggle she had to get there. She did have a good panel ... but it did feel like an elusive position. It did feel like an elusive goal.

Role of adjunct faculty. Although I never asked specifically about the role of adjunct faculty, nearly every respondent brought up adjunct faculty who had taught at least one of their core macro practice classes. Elizabeth said she thinks every single instructor she had for her MSW was an adjunct. Most of those interviewed had positive regard for and described adjunct faculty as especially effective in providing the content and mentorship they craved. However, as was reflected in Diane's vignette, some had negative or ambivalent attitudes toward the overreliance on adjunct faculty. Megan also shared the story of a particularly poor adjunct:

> It was a doctoral student. She was horrible. She was the loveliest woman. She was a terrible instructor. It was really too bad because I think it was a 4-credit course and I bet we got 1 credit worth of information while the other class ... [full-time faculty who taught same course] they got like eight credits' worth. They're like, 'this class is so hard' and we're like, 'really?' And it was so disappointing. I want that class back. I genuinely want to take that class again with someone who can teach it.

Amber was especially articulate in her thoughts on the use of adjunct faculty for macro social work classes within her MSW program,

> I don't know. Yeah most of my classes were taught by adjuncts. I think yeah and maybe maybe there's just a lesser value placed on some of the macro practice skills, among social workers? I don't know. So they don't even have someone there who is doing research, who wants to do research, who wants to focus on that. They, they pick out of a crowd of adjuncts, that changes every year

This theme of feeling less valued continued to be prevalent among the interviewees. It came up when they talked about how they were perceived by direct practice classmates, their course work options, their internship opportunities, internship supervision, and their ability to market themselves successfully as they transitioned from being students to looking for employment.

Tension between Micro and Macro Cohorts

Like with the question on faculty support where adjunct faculty came up as a prevalent theme, I did not specifically ask about divisions between macro and micro practice students in my question on cohort support, although these divisions were certainly something I was aware of and had experienced in my own program. However, when exploring classmates and relationships during their MSW program, many of the interviewees did bring up this division. Most of the respondents talked about feeling misunderstood by their direct practice classmates and professors, or as Diane described, like they weren't doing "real" social work. Both Kaitlin and Grace said they felt supported only when they were "in the classes where I was surrounded by macro students." While most said these divisions were a matter of having likeminded individuals to talk to and exchange ideas with, Megan and Kaitlin described particularly painful experiences between their cohorts. Megan said,

> I found myself part of this macro practice group of people and we ended up having a couple conversations about how our direct practice colleagues were so sensitive and easy to insult. We're like, 'we can't crack jokes, we can't do any of

> that' because the energy in our cohort in the classroom in the [University] was so politically correct. It was SO PC and so hypersensitive. You know, understandably so. These are people who are at the height of their passion projects. There were three of us I remember who would just sit around going, 'God, I really think I pissed so and so off with that side comment.' It's not that we were saying racist things, of course. Everything we were saying, I don't know, we found ourselves with foot in mouth all the time, all the time, all the time. We quickly recognized who the sensitive folks in our cohort were and were like okay, they're really feeling their direct practice, 'all the things' and let's just make sure we're being a little more sensitive to that.

Kaitlin said in her program the micro and macro students seemed to naturally divide, even before they had declared their concentration. When bringing up the tension between the two groups, she described the direct practice cohort in her program as being especially insensitive to ideas and people that didn't fit a particular liberal definition of social justice,

> K: Yeah, but ... and I ... tried to mostly just stay on the sidelines and just observe it happening. But there was tension. I don't know if it was macro versus micro but it was more—yeah, kind of. No. I think a lot of it came down to this perception of social workers and there was one woman specifically who was brought to social work because of her faith. She was very more evangelical Christian and would talk about Jesus a lot. She was mocked and joked about and told that she wasn't right for social work because of this. I was like, 'what the fuck?' Oh, the mocking was horrible and the teasing behind her back. It was horrible. I hated it.
>
> M: Was it just that one person?
>
> K: Yeah, specifically her but there was ... I think it was a greater feeling of religion, in general, but specifically this woman.
>
> M: Was she direct practice, micro?
>
> K: Yeah, she was direct. Yeah, micro.
>
> M: Would you say that some of the tension too was going back to what you were saying before about that understanding of more conservative, more religious perspectives?
>
> K: Right, yeah, absolutely.

M: So maybe it looked like a division between micro and macro?

K: Well, it wasn't really—what I saw happening is she was micro and the micro students were the ones who were very rude to her and the macro students were the ones who were like 'what the hell?'

While these were the most extreme examples, Megan's and Kaitlin's experiences also seem to reflect the concern Diane expressed with the lack of critical thinking within MSW programs or a liberal bias which closes off open, honest and possibly painful discussions on the role of religion, conservativism, or operating within currently constructed political frameworks.

Both Bethany and Elizabeth were "dual degree" students. Many MSW programs allow students to complete both their MSW and another related degree, such as Policy, Public Health, Law, or Nonprofit Management. Bethany and Elizabeth experienced being a part of not only their distinct macro MSW cohort, but also the cohort of students in their other program. Despite being in different secondary programs, they both described their MSW cohort as the people they especially identified with politically, relationally and professionally, but their secondary program cohort as being more academically rigorous. Bethany said about her secondary cohort: "It was very focused. They were there just all the time, 10 hours a day." Elizabeth said of her secondary cohort: "They were crazy–smart frickin' kids ... very differently minded people ... totally outside your comfort zone learning totally new things." Similar comments came from Bethany and Elizabeth when they described the difference in content of their courses between the two programs as well.

Despite the significant differences, Elizabeth said the social work perspective was welcome by her secondary program cohort. When I asked her what perspective she

brought she said, “I think real world experience, a social service perspective ... this is how it works in the real world and these are the things that are messy.” This is an interesting juxtaposition when compared to the tensions described between the different MSW cohorts.

MSW Classes

There was a range of opinions on the utility MSW classes served in terms of professional socialization. Many of the respondents said while they didn’t think the classes themselves were particularly useful, it was the context of the classes which helped them learn what it meant to be a macro social worker. Megan said, “... there was an opening and world view that I was exposed to where I could think more critically about the work I do and put it into the context locally and globally.” Frances said about her experience: “I don’t know how to answer that because I’m not sure exactly if the classes gave me everything I needed to succeed? But they helped me engage in the world of macro practice, which was very helpful.” Additional issues raised about the MSW classes were their rigor, the desire for practical skills and the lack of macro practice course options.

Rigor. Bethany and Elizabeth both described their secondary program classes as much more academically rigorous and challenging than their MSW classes. Bethany said, “Some of the courses at the [MSW school] were challenging, but in a different way, maybe more of a social/emotional learning about those kind of skills.” Elizabeth was more critical of her social work courses compared to her secondary program: “I thought it [secondary program] was hard. They pushed you, you were learning. The [MSW program] was like ‘whatever’, you just gotta get your work done.” Jacob, who had a

Master's degree in mechanical engineering before pursuing his MSW, said he didn't find the MSW course work to be especially rigorous and he was able to both go to school and work full time without much of a problem.

In contrast, Nancy and Laura both talked about the rigor of their program being overwhelming. Nancy was Advanced Standing and finished her program in 1 year. She also worked 20–30 hours/week while completing her internship. Nancy said for her and many in her cohort, the amount of work was "... just unrealistic ... We were all pulling our hair out by midterm." Laura was a full program, part-time student who also worked full time. She said when she started her internship in her second year of the program it was like, "you got hit by a Mack truck and went, like, 'what?!'" The increase in intensity led her to describe the second year of her program as "the trauma year ... like a 'make-or-break year.'"

The difference in perceptions of rigor seems to be more of a reflection upon the individual characteristics of the interviewees, and the not the programs, given those within the same program had different perceptions of how rigorous their MSW coursework was.

A little more practical stuff. When discussing classes, they liked or things they didn't like, nearly all the respondents commented on their desire for practice-based classes. The courses described as most helpful were: grant writing, budgeting, community organizing, and program and policy development.

Frances and Isaac both said they would have liked to have classes that were less theoretical and more skill-based, especially when it came to politics and policy making. Frances said, "... a little bit more practical stuff. I would have loved to have been told

'this is going to happen,' like when you're at a certain level, it's about a policy, but who controls that policy more than anything else." Both she and Isaac, who attended the same MSW program, mentioned the same three classes they took which they both thought really "hit on it," but Frances said, "A little bit more would have been good." Amber also wished she had gotten more in the way of practical, technical skills. She said, "What I really want to know is 'what are the nuts and bolts on public policy and how do I dig in and how I really know it, understand it, live it, work it?'" Similarly, Nancy said, "I feel like there are some small skills ... just like the importance of how to lead a meeting and things like that. It's like stuff that you're going to have to do, but yet nobody talked about it."

On the other hand, Laura, felt her policy class gave her the chance to build her skills by "... looking at policy and really dissecting policy that I didn't have before ... like I could look at a policy and kind of figure it out. But to have that formal training to do it was a lot different." Laura did say she felt her MSW program inadequately prepared students for future leadership roles. In reflecting on her supervision class she said, "So then when some people graduated and that's what they went into, I don't know that they had all the skills, where I had the benefit of building those skills organically."

Heather, who had many years of practice experience, was a notable exception when it came to desire for practice classes. She said the focus on theory and frameworks complemented her experiences: "I don't know that it [MSW classes] helped me ... but it sure helped me flesh things out ... refined and probably took further what I already knew ... a better framework than I think I had before."

Lack of class options. Several of the respondents said they were disappointed with the lack of options available for macro social work classes, which they again attributed to the lack of value their program placed on those in a macro practice concentration. Many said they had to seek courses in other departments to get the kind of course content they wanted for their MSW. Grace and Nancy both pointed out their program only had 1 concentration for macro social work students, but 3 for those interested in micro social work. Grace said she was glad the program allowed her to take electives outside of the MSW program because she didn't "feel that the breadth of classes for macro classes was there. There just wasn't as many available options versus if you were a clinical focus."

Amber and Jacob (who graduated 10 years apart) both said they thought the lack of macro social work courses was because their program placed less value on macro social work practice. Jacob said it seemed like they were "just an add-on and not really an intentional or formalized program." Amber said it seemed like "they throw in a class here and there and say, 'here you go, this is a good thing to know, but let's get back to business ... train all you therapists.'" As we saw in the theme on classmates, Elizabeth was warned before even starting her program that she wouldn't get the kind of classes she wanted in her MSW. This was part of the reason she sought a secondary degree.

Another issue related to course options was time to take additional or preferred courses. Approximately half of the interviewees had a BSW, which allowed them to complete their MSW in 1 full year if they attended full time. In addition to their internship, required course work, and often full-time work, there simply wasn't enough time for them to take additional electives. Amber said she would have liked to take more

policy-related courses, but her program was such a "whirlwind ... you just gotta git 'er done and hope for the best ..." Isaac also said he wished he could have taken additional classes, but he wanted to get done as quickly as possible, and there was "no way to fit them into my schedule." Nancy said she would have gone part time if she could have afforded it, just so she could "have gotten more out of it and retained more."

MSW Internship

When it's good, it's great. Known as the *signature pedagogy* (CSWE, 2015) of social work education, the internship is one of the primary ways formal socialization into the profession is expected to occur. This seemed to be true for most of the participants who completed a macro social work internship. Jacob commented his internships were the most valuable thing he got out of his MSW program. Laura said about her second-year (macro) placement,

> I actually interned for the Executive Director of [Tribal] Social Services, not knowing that it was like a grooming position, but learned about budgets. I learned how to read a budget. I learned about indirect costs. I learned about what it takes to run a department, looking at policies and procedures for other divisions, kind of learning here and there about different things. So that was the eye-opening piece. I look at her [Executive Director] and 'oh my gosh you do all this?', and she'd be like 'yeah and they don't teach this in school.'

It was clear being able to see macro social work in action and be supervised by people who both understood social work and the macro level activities was important for understanding their future professional role. Bethany in describing her internship with a lobbying and advocacy organization said, "Getting those skills that I talked about from being at the Capitol, getting policy experience, learning about how to run a small nonprofit ... getting to experience that and view that up close was really helpful."

When it's bad, it's horrible. Another place the micro/macro division came up was in the area of expectations for MSW internships. Those completing a full program (meaning they didn't have an undergraduate degree in social work) were required to complete a foundation placement, which meant engaging in direct practice, but not necessarily macro practice. Jacob described the macro practice internship he had as a foundation student doing research and focus groups, but then found out he was "supposed to have more micro practice experiences" and spent time working at a food shelf. Grace, who was an advanced standing student (meaning she had an undergraduate degree in social work) said her macro social work placement was interesting because it was only available for second year and advanced standing students, but seemed much more suited for a foundation student,

> Yeah. Interesting too, I was in a department that had no social worker, which was fine. They had an arrangement for years with another department who had her MSW. Oh, they had commented to me that they thought it was really interesting that they could only have an advanced standing or a second-year student when the work they were doing felt a lot safer and requires less experience than doing case management or something like that.

Laura did her first internship in behavioral health and said she mostly picked it out of convenience—it was close to her work and she knew the person supervising her. She was also trying to determine her MSW concentration and hadn't had experience in mental health work. She said this internship showed her,

> ... that I could do mental health but it wasn't something that I was comfortable with. I think it was too much pressure for me. I didn't want to be responsible for messing somebody up! [Laughs] But I'm not going to if I don't have to! It was like solidifying. I took a psychopathology course after graduation. I came back for those 8 weeks and took that course, which was really helpful to just give a basic understanding. But then it's like I got it out of the way, it's done, and if I ever need it, it's there.

Similarly, Bethany and Megan said their foundation internship showed them direct practice was not the place they wanted to be. Megan reflected,

> I did an internship with [County] my first year, which was good because I had no case management experience, so it was really good. My caseload was like 10 Spanish-speaking boys between 2 and 5 who had autism, Down syndrome, or lead poisoning. That was such a good experience for me because I was able to use my Spanish and get a sense for what these Spanish-speaking community members of ours are experiencing and what the resources are. But that was a huge piece of why I knew I didn't want to do direct practice: I can't go to people's houses. I just can't, because I can't separate that well.

These comments are similar to the ones heard in the section on pre-socialization of interviewees who had BSWs. In some ways, the requirement of doing a direct practice social work internship served as a negative anticipatory socialization into the profession.

It wasn't like, pick one out of the book: Lack of field placement options. While interviewees said they benefitted from their macro social work internships, most of them also said there were not a variety of options available, even at schools which had a macro social work concentration. Like with her BSW internship, Amber found herself having to create her own macro social work internship: "I created the placement and it wasn't like, pick out of the book one. And I think I looked at the options available, none of them really seemed like a public policy role that I really wanted." She also had to fight within this internship to get the kind of policy experience she sought,

> ... my task supervisor really just wanted me to be her photocopy girl ... and I had to push back really hard to have like a real project, or you know really get ... so you know we did a, we did a day at the Capitol and I helped with that and I participated in that. There was a taskforce on families and children and HIV or something like that I went to. A lot of it was, like, 'I don't have anything to do' and she was like, 'oh, well can you do this busywork thing that I don't want to do.'

Megan's macro social work internship experience (more than 10 years after Amber) was parallel to Amber's, with again very similar language,

> There were not—and I know this was a complaint of a lot of people and the faculty was well aware—there were not great internships available. There just weren't. Then I tried to design my own internship ... I had somehow gotten connected to someone who was enthusiastic about giving me a placement but ... I sort of whittled away my time there trying to think of things to do. They didn't have time to help me design an internship but I apparently got enough done that I was able to fulfill the requirement. Again, I didn't earn that part of my degree. I paid for it but I didn't really earn it.

Frances, Kaitlin and Laura also created their own macro social work internships, although their experiences were more positive than the ones shared by Amber and Megan. Frances said she "... made the internship because I just wanted to intern with them. I wanted to try and work in a non-social work setting because they're like a law/educational advocacy setting. So I gained a lot of confidence there." Laura also wanted to work in a particular agency, the one she was already working at,

> Then my second one, I always wanted to do. I knew one of them I wanted to do a place—of employment internship. [Name], the Executive Director at the time, I think was one of the only people with an MSW anyway, and so I had asked her and she was thrilled to do that and pass on some knowledge. I think there was also that aspect of it being like tribal member to tribal member. There was some meaningfulness behind it. Learning more about the agency I was working for—I knew a lot about my division and my program, but learning more big-picture.

Kaitlin said she would have chosen a macro practice internship for her foundation placement, but there were only micro opportunities on the list of available placements. The one she chose did say micro/macro and her internship supervisor helped her engage in macro social work activities. For her second placement, she sought out her own internship at an international relief agency which allowed her to do organizing, public education, fundraising, focus groups and research.

Internship supervision and consultation: Back at the margins. About half of the interviewees said there was no social worker or macro social work staff at their internship site. CSWE requires MSW students receive at least 1 hour of social work supervision from an individual with an MSW and 2 years' post-MSW experience. Certain programs also require supervisors to be licensed. As is explored in the next section this is especially problematic for macro practice social workers because many of them are not licensed. Finding a social worker to provide this supervision, for free, requires either the MSW field director, agency, or student to locate someone willing to provide this supervision. For Amber, it was a case manager within the agency who did her supervision. For Kaitlin it was someone the field director located. Kaitlin said she thought her social work supervisor was a good supervisor, but said,

> I think it was harder that he wasn't at the organization and didn't know much about the organization ... I think it would have been better [to have him onsite], but I would have rather just had the internship and an outside person because there was no other way I was going to get an international focused internship without having an outside supervisor.

As part of the internship experience, MSW students are typically required to participate in a seminar course lead by school faculty. The purpose is to help students connect their classroom experience with professional practice. For many of those interviewed, the seminar was not helpful to them for several reasons, such as the field instructors did not understand macro social work, students in the seminar were in direct practice internships, or assignments were geared toward direct social work experiences. For example, Amber said she didn't get a lot of value out her field seminar, and despite having a seminar instructor who had experience as a county social work supervisor, the assignments were focused on things she couldn't address because of her macro social

work internship. For Nancy, the final field seminar project required her to do a case presentation, and she said she remembered "freaking out, like what do you mean I have to do a case consult?!" She didn't have clients at her internship. She credits her seminar instructor for helping her to adapt the assignment, "even though she is a [modality] practitioner, she's still super social justice-y. Yeah, she's really great."

Elizabeth wasn't so lucky with her seminar instructor and described her as "a whack job" and said all the students in her field seminar were concentrating on macro social work, but at the time the MSW program only offered a concentration in Administration. Elizabeth's interest was in policy, so she said she often felt like "sort of an odd man out."

Grace and Nancy were the only ones in their field seminar engaged in macro social work. Nancy said she enjoyed hearing about the different places people were interning, but Grace said,

> I didn't resonate with them. They were talking about these issues and there were really great issues to bring to the field, but they were so completely different than what I was facing. They maybe learned a little bit from me in that, 'oh this is what a macro social worker might do', but it wasn't like I could provide them support ...

How Do You Even Get Them to Look at You? The Transition from Formal to Post-formal Socialization

The final theme of the formal socialization stage to emerge was similar to anticipatory socialization in that it covers moving from the formal, academic setting, into professional social work macro positions. Nearly every one of the interviewees talked about their difficulty with this transition. One of the most significant barriers was selling their degree and making potential employers understand why someone with a Master's

degree in social work was qualified for the position. This theme is explored more fully in the next section on post-formal socialization, but it's important to note many of the respondents felt their MSW education inadequately prepared them for making this case to future employers. We saw earlier Frances's dismay at her professor reminding a macro social work panelist about her struggle to obtain her position. Rather than framing it as a series of steps students must take to ensure the kind of positions they desire, this student was left feeling like getting a macro social work position was an elusive goal. Frances was not alone in this feeling. Bethany, Kaitlin, Jacob, and Isaac all said remarkably similar things about not being prepared to connect their macro social work education with their professional practice.

Jacob said he was disappointed there wasn't more thought on how to define, market and teach macro practice in a way "that helps students understand it and know what they can do with it when they go out into the professional world." He said he didn't see a lot of cohesion between macro social work and the field at large: "Everyone comes to get a degree, but then does their own thing with it." Bethany said she wished her MSW would have provided things similar to what her secondary program did "things like, here's some tips for when you're at a professional dinner ... how to network ... strike up a conversation ... Or even like resume, how to use key words to get jobs in macro practice ..."

Kaitlin said she didn't have as difficult of a time selling her degree once she was in front of a prospective employer, but it was getting in from on them that was the difficulty,

> ... the coursework was helpful for what I wanted to do. I think the problem came into play is selling that to the employer ... how do you get them to even look at it? So I feel like once I'm in an interview I could sell that, but on paper ... How do you get them to even look at it [resume]? How do I let them know that this is actually very applicable, not just tangentially so?

This was also the case for Isaac. He said he graduated with his MSW still not knowing what he would do with his degree and had to "work hard to sell my macro practice social work training to get a job with [name]." This lack of understanding from the broader field and under preparation of macro social work MSW graduates has implications that can be seen in the next section on post-formal professional socialization.

Analysis of Formal-socialization Findings: A Means to an Elusive End

Rather than a simple process, the formal socialization stage is complex and varied. For those macro practice social workers I interviewed, the process was considered effective, yet a number of factors contributed to this success and the barriers or tensions individuals faced as students also contributed to the development of their professional identity. As these findings show, it wasn't just the classes students took, but rather the overall context of their experience which was most valuable to them. Access to professional role models and mentors in the form of faculty, internship supervisors, other disciplinary professionals and even classmates were mentioned as important to their understanding of what macro practice social workers *do* as well as how they navigate the tension of not always being valued for their practice. Participating in a macro practice internship was noted as being critical to their understanding of macro practice social work. While those with Advanced Standing appreciated the condensed nature of their program, they also expressed desire for additional courses on topics of interest, such as policy analysis, budgeting, grant writing, or other practical content which would assist in

their future practice. Although nearly all of the interviewees said their MSW program was essential for their current practice, many struggled to translate their education in a way future employers could understand.

For many of the interviewees, classmates were mentioned as being especially important within formal professional socialization. While classmates were certainly noted for the camaraderie and support they provided, as those going through a similar process, they were also highlighted for the mentoring and modeling role they had. Several of the interviewees said their classmates were already engaged in macro practice social work, and it was through them that they learned what it looked like and meant to be a macro practice social worker.

Faculty noted as being most influential were those who both taught and practiced within the field—specifically adjunct professors. The ability of these teachers to impart practical instruction and real-life examples was especially appreciated. The MSW was a means to an end, learning what macro practice social work looked like and how they could do it as professionals.

While appreciating the practical experience and knowledge adjunct instructors imparted, there was also discomfort with a perceived overreliance on adjunct professors. Every interviewee said they had a class taught by an adjunct professor and some said *all* their social work classes were taught by adjunct professors. This communicated to some of the interviewees a lack of investment or support by their MSW program for a macro practice concentration. Despite being a formal part of the social work curriculum since the 1960s, interviewees described their concentration as being "just an add-on," giving it

a feeling of disorganization and serving as a distraction from the "real" focus of the MSW program which was clinical social work practice.

This feeling of not being valued or valuable within the MSW program manifested itself in other ways beyond the program's use of adjunct faculty. Interviewees talked about feeling divided and judged by those within the micro practice cohorts, they did not feel a sense of camaraderie or connection to these classmates. In contrast, those who were pursuing dual degrees said they felt respected by their secondary program cohorts. Interviewees also talked about the lack of macro practice field placements within their program, forcing some of them to create their own placements with varying degrees of success. For those able to create or be placed within macro practice settings, there was also the issue of not always having macro practice social workers who could provide supervision. This required them to seek social work supervision outside of their internship agency. Those who came to their MSW program without a BSW also reported being required to complete internships which focused primarily on micro practice activities.

While interviewees criticized the lack of macro practice internship options, nearly all of those who participated in them found them useful and valuable. Internships provided an opportunity to participate in the systems, policy, organizing or administrative practice they sought. They were also able to interact with both macro practice social workers and other professionals doing the kind of work they wanted to do. For those with macro practice social work supervisors they could also engage in conversations about professional identity, licensure and practice.

For those with Advanced Standing, the condensed nature of their program was both a positive and a negative. Several expressed the desire to take additional courses in areas of interest, such as policy or international social work, but were unable to fit these courses into their schedule. Regardless of their standing, most of the interviewees said they wished their MSW program focused further on practical courses, such as grant writing, budgeting or lobbying.

While explored further in the next section on post-formal professional socialization, translation of the MSW into professional practice was the final theme of this stage. For some of the interviewees, translating their educational training for future employers was difficult. This did not seem to be something they learned how to do during their MSW program and it often required a great deal of trial and error for them to market their credentials in a way which was understandable to future employers, especially if those employers were not social workers themselves.

Chapter 8

Post-formal Socialization Experiences of Macro Practice Social Workers: Back into the Shadows

Post-formal socialization is conceptualized here as the time after interviewees completed their MSW program and entered professional practice. This section describes the process new MSW macro practice social workers went through as they entered professional social work and adapted their previous knowledge, education and experience to the reality of macro social work practice. For many of them the biggest challenges within this stage included how they professionally identify themselves to others and the role of social work licensing in supporting or invalidating their identification within the field. Bethany's story especially reveals this tension. She strongly identities as a macro practice social worker, but rejects licensure and therefore questions her ability to legitimately call herself a social worker. The particular themes identified during this stage included:

1. Breadth of options available
2. Making the case
3. A welcome but isolated perspective
4. Professional identification
5. Professional regulation:
    a. Unlicensed macro practice social workers
    b. Licensed macro practice social workers
6. An evolving understanding of macro practice social work
7. Who takes it on?

Vignette of Post-formal Socialization: Bethany

Bethany has been in her current position as program manager at a public health organization for over 5 years. After finishing her MSW, she worked for a short time as a political campus organizer. She has a dual Master's degree, but says the work she currently does is public policy, "but we do little 'p' policy so it's all voluntary, so if there's a property that wants to go smoke free we'll help them, help support their residents."

Bethany said she "kind of fell into public health." At the program where Bethany works, the Executive Director is a licensed social worker who also maintains a small private practice on the side. Bethany said she didn't have to make the case to her boss on why they should hire a social worker over a public health worker. She describes her boss as having an integrated skill set, the "quintessential macro practice social worker, who was really a macro practice social worker before I think we really coined that term." Before starting her position, Bethany didn't realize how helpful her degree in social work would be:

> I get call after call after call and it's largely from people who are living in affordable housing, moms of kids or elderly. The elderly who say, "My health is really really poor" and one of those reasons—and there tend to be a lot of reasons, molds, bed bugs, all these things—but one of the, a lot of the reasons that we get calls about it is because of secondhand smoke from their neighbor. So women who have multiple miscarriages or kids who are missing school because they have asthma because their neighbor chain smokes. So there's really this ripple effect.

Bethany believes her training in social work offers a welcome perspective when working with other professionals in public health, especially around the issue of harm reduction vs. self-determination. She said she can help bridge the,

> silos of these different sectors that are very overlapping and don't work together, and I think public health and social work are great examples of not a lot of overlap and I think there's a lot of misunderstanding. When I talk to direct social workers and even macro practice about what I do there tends to be this [makes a hissing inhale of breath] kind of visceral like, 'oh no tobacco control' and I think there's this perception of not wanting to take away cigarettes from people, which I absolutely understand. And on the flip side in the public health world I think sometimes there's like this, 'there's no such thing as harm reduction, we can't talk about it.' It's like it's good or it's bad. Whereas social work is very harm reduction and taking people where they're at. I see both perspectives and I think there is room for partnership and ways to do the work that kind of marry those two ideas that I think sometimes from my perspective anyway those two worlds don't mesh.

Despite finding a position which integrates her interests in policy, social work and public health, Bethany says there are people who don't understand the connection between her degree and the work she is currently doing. She serves on a board for advancing macro social work and says the groups is always asking: "How do we describe what this means to other people, even though they're workers, because I think it's definitely different, or is that [social worker] even a term that you can use to describe yourself?" She goes on to say even with social workers who may be engaged in macro social work, identity can be an issue,

> We struggle with how to attract new people to our organization, new macro practice social workers. I think there's a lot of people like you mentioned earlier, you know, doing elements of macro practice social work, but they don't think or view themselves as doing that or recognize that they're doing it. So, yes, I think it is a struggle that we're kind of learning as we go.

When asked about her own social work identity, Bethany said,

> I think I view a macro practice social worker as someone who adheres to the ethics and has the values of the social work profession who is working has the values of the social work profession who is working in a macro practice capacity, be it nonprofit or public or at the program management person level or in policy. So in that regards I do view myself as a macro practice social worker, kind of self-defined, and I think like I mentioned, I've been able to bring kind of a different perspective to some meetings than there would be otherwise. And I

> think in that way I am able to practice macro practice social work because I'm able to bring the social work values and ethics with me into a realm that they wouldn't normally be and advocate for them, so I guess I view it as I am doing that work whether or not [laughs] whether or not you call it that, I view that I am doing that work.

Bethany also said the support of other macro social workers has been helpful in maintaining her social work identity. She said coming in to graduate school she didn't know any macro social workers, although in hindsight she probably knew more than she realized because they were unlikely to self-identify. She indicated this is certainly true for her today and she is very hesitant to call herself a macro practice social worker unless she's talking to others who understand what it means. Bethany is not licensed and worries about "you know, getting in trouble where you're not supposed to call yourself a social worker."

While not being licensed causes distress for Bethany when it comes to publicly identifying her educational background, Bethany said she still doesn't find value in becoming licensed. She said, "Strictly from a job perspective the jobs that I have applied for haven't required and I just haven't felt like I needed to make the financial commitment." She indicated she was still paying off loans and there just wasn't any benefit or need to become licensed. Bethany said she finds the whole process of social work licensing confusing and it wasn't something she even considered before entering her MSW program. Many of her peers have chosen to become licensed and have talked about the questions on the exam being exclusively focused on direct practice social work.

> At this point in time, I would actually have to go back and relearn everything. The longer I wait, obviously the harder it's going to be. I guess it was totally lost on me when I was a student, this whole licensure thing and how controversial it was for macro practice.

Bethany said conversations about the importance of licensure and the division between micro and macro practice are unique to social work. Friends she has from her secondary program do not have to worry about licensure and whether they can identify by their professional title (e.g., Policy Analyst or Program Developer),

> But my counterparts who did the dual degree with me and I would consider to be doing macro practice social work, like when I see them, we don't ever talk about this. This is something that it's really just in that social work bubble that we talk about this.

Similarly, when asked how her views on macro practice social work have changed over the years, Bethany said it is something she thinks about and considers less on a day-to-day basis.

> I don't want to say I think of it less intentionally. I feel like with all things you practice, the values and the ethics that you're trained in get kind of engrained within you and bring those, whether consciously or subconsciously with you, into what you do and all aspects of your life, professionally or personally or volunteer. So I think in some ways I think less about it and in other ways I also think more about it.

Bethany went on to share that she is intentional in who she talks to about having a degree in social work. On the day of our interview she had met with a property manager of a public housing authority who appreciated Bethany's degree in social work.

> That helped create some buy-in, I think ... there are situations, like, if I'm with someone that I think it would be helpful to share that piece of information, I do. Then when it's a situation like around other social workers or people who are licensed, I am hyper aware of it because I'm not sure what I should say or not say. So I think it depends on the context.

It became clear the longer we talked, for Bethany, macro social work is not just a job or way to earn a paycheck, but a way to find purpose in "all aspects of my life." For example, in her free time, Bethany actively volunteers as a Big Sister, she is on the board of a macro practice social work organization and is a member of her local Advisory

Board of Health. In joining the Board of Health, she said she was interested in seeing how it aligned with what she is currently doing professionally. She has found the work immensely rewarding and said,

> Again, I think there's overlap of some social work, so it's not just tobacco-related issues but everything from emergency preparedness to things like we've talked about Zika virus. We've been talking about water quality in light of the Flint, Michigan piece, which obviously has a lot of ties to health and equity and social justice and how do we as a community handle if there is lead in the water? How can you make sure that people aren't drinking water with lead in it? So again, it goes back to there are so many overlaps with health and equity and social justice and the environments in which people live that really shape (especially with kids) shape development and whether or not they are able to have the same opportunities as kids that don't grow up with those.

As for the future, Bethany hopes to continue working professionally as a social worker, but wants to move even further into environmental justice work as she sees her experiences revealing the layers and overlaps between the two. She places a value on continuing to grow and challenging herself to try new things.

> I don't feel like there's ever this static endpoint or like now I know everything there is to know. I mean, even though I've been here for 5 years, I'm constantly being challenged and learning new things, be it from the HR perspective or policies that change or partnering with other fields or groups that have similar interests. So, it's been very fulfilling because I feel like it transcends just my job and it's able to expand to other parts of my life. I think it's only going to keep growing and building upon itself. I think it's made me a better person professionally and personally. It keeps me on my toes and challenged.

Themes of Post-formal Socialization

Bethany's story does an excellent job of describing the kinds of professional practice and identity issues macro practice social workers grapple with in their work. Several of the experiences highlighted in Bethany's story were present for the other interviewees as well. The breadth of positions available for macro practice social workers found was especially surprising to me, and them as well. While some struggled

with "making their case" to potential employers, most were able to find a position which allowed them to do the kind of work they desired and had been trained to do. They have also found their social work perspective is unique, welcome and helpful in interdisciplinary situations where they are often the only social worker.

Despite finding satisfying and meaningful macro practice social work, most of the interviewees struggled to explain the connection between their training and their current position to other coworkers, supervisors, and even their friends and family. They described relying on informal and formal networks of other macro practice social workers who provide them support and a place where they feel understood. All the interviewees said they identified internally as a macro practice social worker, but they didn't all describe themselves this way when talking to others.

As it does for Bethany, the role of licensure complicates this conversation and introduces an element of fear they will "get in trouble" if they say they are a social worker, but don't have a social work license. For many, this is an issue that irritates them, but not one they spend much time or energy trying to change or engage. Most of them would rather focus on the work at hand and seem to think the larger profession should do more to raise the profile and support the work of macro practice, given its history and rhetoric. However, some individuals also acknowledged they should do more in terms of identifying themselves as social workers in order to encourage others to do the same or bring more interested individuals into the field.

The Breadth of Options Available to Macro Practice Social Workers

As I transitioned between questions on formal to post-formal socialization, I asked interviewees what they wish they had known before starting their MSW program.

Given the difficulty many of them talked about regarding selling their MSW to employers, I was surprised one of the most common responses was wishing they had known the breadth of options available to them for macro social work. Megan said, "I wish I had a better context of how vast and varied it could be. I wish I understood how many kinds of people could call themselves social workers—politicians, care coordinators, program managers." Laura said she wished she'd known that "there's more to social work than just child welfare."

While this kind of realization made sense coming from those without an undergraduate degree in social work, it also came from those with a BSW. Nancy said,

> Probably just, like, it's pretty much you can do macro practice social work in any subdivision of social work. I had just started working at [name]. I mean, I knew that I liked the work but I didn't think that [population] would be my thing. So, I wish I would have known more about how I could apply the two of them together because it was kind of like okay, cool, I know how to do planning and how to collect data and do all these things. But what do I want to DO with that?"

Looking at job titles alone (see Appendix B), the breadth of positions these macro social workers have is extensive. The longest time between completing their MSW and entering a macro social work position was 4 years. This was Catherine, who obtained an MSW, but had a concentration in clinical mental health. Catherine was not intentionally looking for a macro social work position, but found herself continuously promoted to her current position as CEO of a child welfare agency. In contrast to Catherine, 6 individuals moved directly into macro social work after graduating with their MSW. Six individuals took between 6 months and 1 year; and 1 person entered macro social work approximately 2 years after completing their MSW. Most of those who did not enter

macro social work directly first worked in human services engaged in direct social work practice.

Several of the individuals I interviewed *did* spend some time in direct social work settings after finishing their MSW. Elizabeth was in a unique situation because she had received a child welfare scholarship and was required to work in a county setting to pay back the support she had received during her graduate education. However, Elizabeth said at the time (early 2000s) the economy was poor and positions specifically in child welfare were scarce. Her interest was in economic security and she was given permission to work in a county welfare department where she spent a year before moving into administration and then eventually as a state policy coordinator.

Megan graduated with her MSW in the middle of the Great Recession (late 2000s). She said going to school "was a defense mechanism. There were no jobs ... the only jobs available were AmeriCorps positions, which I took." Megan spent a year in her AmeriCorps position doing volunteer management. At the end of the year the agency where she had done AmeriCorps hired her. A short time later she moved into her current position as a program specialist for a disaster relief organization.

Frances spent 2 years doing direct social work for a housing nonprofit after graduating with her MSW. While this was not the ideal position, she said it "was a really good experience. I got some on-the-ground experience, learning details about housing ... and all the different state policies that dictate that." She integrated her interest in macro social work into her direct practice work. She helped redesign the agency's application and assessment process to ensure better access to homelessness services. While working in this position she saw a job posting for a county housing planning specialist. She

applied and was offered the job. Frances credits her direct practice experience in housing with helping to make the case for why she was the best candidate for the job plan: "... I would not have gotten this job if I didn't ingratiate myself in the housing world, learn all of those things."

Similar to Frances, Nancy and Kaitlin both spent time after graduation working in homeless shelters. Nancy was there for about a year and it was the same agency she had worked at during her MSW. She was given a promotion to service coordinator, but still found herself stressed and unhappy. Nancy said, "I knew that I didn't want to—I did that for a year and then didn't want to continue on. So I actually left and did not have another job lined up." She spent 4 months looking for a new position, applying for jobs which were similar to the one she left. She said it took her partner reminding her, "You already did that with [name] and that was hard on you. You don't want to do that." She said he kept her from making "some rash decisions, because it got to the point where I was like, I need a job, you know, like real bad. So luckily I held out." Four months later Nancy was hired into her current position coordinating case management services and providing the organization data analysis on their clients. She still does some direct practice in this position, but has found a way to integrate her interest in data, policy and evaluation in her day to day work.

While many of the respondents found value in their direct practice experiences, Amber resisted the notion someone should do micro social work before engaging in macro practice. She currently works as a policy specialist and struggles with her supervisor who has never done macro social work and, according to Amber, doesn't have the necessary skill set for effective macro social work,

> So I think there are still a lot of people that have that, I don't want to say bias. Mentality, maybe, that you really need to have gone through the motions of being part of the system in order to reshape it and I just, I disagree.

Making the Case for Macro Social Work

Many of the interviewees talked about having to "make the case" for why a degree in social work was relevant to the positions they were interested in doing or had been hired to do. Kaitlin indicated she applied to approximately 40 different jobs, managing them through an Excel spreadsheet, and interviewed at maybe 3 or 4 of them. She said the initial barrier was "trying to sell the MSW to what I was applying for." She found "tweaking" her resume a bit to better highlight her international experience and coursework was helpful, although ultimately it was the connection to the agency she had done her MSW internship with which gave her the break she'd been seeking.

Kaitlin spent approximately 2 months postgraduation trying to find a position doing international social work or international development, but got to a point where "it was like I just need a job" and so she applied as a part-time volunteer coordinator at a local homeless shelter. She worked there for about 4 months before a position opened in the same place she had completed her internship, allowing her to do international development for a time before moving to her current organization as a project manager for disaster relief. When I asked what she thought the barrier was to getting a macro social work position after finishing her MSW, she said, "I don't think I was selling myself right at first."

Like Kaitlin, Grace spent approximately 6 months after graduation applying for jobs before being hired at her current agency as a program manager for senior services. Grace said the job hunt process was "really frustrating. So even with like my own family

and friends, explaining that, 'no I don't want to be a school social worker or be a case worker'." Because she was relatively young, without a lot of professional experience, she didn't feel her MSW translated well for employers. She indicated she was very intentional about the language in her cover letter and resume detailing the courses she had taken in her MSW program,

> So I put on my resume that I have my Master's degree in social work with an emphasis in nonprofit management because I feel that it's easier for people to understanding why I'm applying for a nonprofit management job ... So I tried to include that coursework to help justify that okay maybe I haven't done this in a professional setting, but I have had exposure to these types of things.

Nancy said when she graduated with her MSW and started applying for jobs, employers did not see the connection. She heard things like,

> 'What do you mean you want to be a legislative aide or you want to do phone canvassing? It says here you have a social work degree. Did you decide after you became a social worker that you don't want to be?' I'm like 'no!' So even just people in the field, needing to educate them about that. I mean, even in my organization now, I'm the only licensed social worker.

In this quote Nancy also touches on another common theme, which was being the only or one of the only macro social workers in the professional setting.

A Welcome, but Isolated Perspective

Nearly all the interviewees work in settings where they are the only or one of the only macro social workers, usually in a host setting. For many, the lack of other social workers in their immediate working environment is isolating and requires them to find support and professional development through informal networks or professionals outside the field of social work. Nancy said she has "gotten used to being the only social worker," but Grace finds it especially challenging because "it's not like I can go to someone else and say 'oh I'm having this issue.'" Similarly, Heather's supervisor is not

a social worker, although she does have a policy, communication and development background. Heather feels comfortable asking for assistance in these job functions, but "as far as supervision, I think she's okay at it, but it would be nice to be supervised by a social work supervisor. To sit down with me and do that. I don't have that."

For Bethany and Kaitlin, the only other macro social worker in their organization is their supervisor. Kaitlin said before she interviewed for her current position she looked up the director on LinkedIn and was excited to discover he had an MSW and had done fundraising work in his past. Having a boss who has an MSW made explaining the value of her degree much easier during the interview and when talking to others in the organization she is "much more apt to tell them that I'm a social worker actually, yes." Megan said in her work environment there is only one other, a BSW social worker, who is a volunteer and only comes in once a week. Although the volunteers' duties are not macro focused, Megan discussed how much she enjoys being with another social worker: "You can tell when you're in the room with a social worker, you know?" Frances also said the people she works best with are other macro social workers: "There's some sort of like mind meld that happens it's like thinking on the same terms of, policy matters, people matter, how do you connect the people that we're working with, with the systems we're building?" Because they are outside of direct practice settings with coworkers or colleagues who are also social workers, the interviewees talked about providing a "social work" perspective within interdisciplinary teams and work. Bethany's story about bridging the differences between social work and public health was one example of this brokering macro social workers do daily.

Heather's position as a treatment court coordinator also requires daily interaction with a variety of other professionals. Shortly after starting in her position she built a consulting team of a variety of professions such as a specialist in housing, AODA treatment, an attorney and a case manager. Heather said during these team meetings it is clear to her how important and different a social work perspective is. She finds other service providers don't always understand the motivations of clients or how to implement consequences that will mitigate behavior and not make it worse. Heather's position requires her to pay attention to the micro interactions with clients, while also managing the beliefs and values of other professionals who have a stake in the clinical outcomes.

Diane and Elizabeth shared similar stories about their effectiveness in bringing social work perspectives to policy makers. Diane said her direct practice experience gives her a credibility among policy makers that she is not "just a paid talker. I actually know the programs and system's impact on individuals." She can navigate both the micro and macro implications of policy change. Elizabeth shared a story about the time she helped negotiate rules around sanctions for welfare recipients who didn't comply with the work requirements of the program. Elizabeth said the policymakers refused to meet with the welfare advocates or program administrators, but were willing to talk to her. They regarded her as having policy knowledge, direct practice experience and a pragmatic perspective which allowed them to hear her. This gave her the opportunity to advocate for a more gradual implementation of punitive regulations. Her ability to navigate the political landscape, along with her strong relationship building skills across the aisle, is what made her successful.

Laura, who works as a tribal liaison for a state agency is responsible for overseeing tribal programs for children and families, which include the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), child care licensing, early childhood programs and child support programs for nearly a dozen different tribes. Because she works for the state, she reports to the secretary of the agency and makes sure she "is briefed on any issues, so that way, if she's out and about, if she hears anything, she already knows what's going on." One of the first things Laura did was to organize a series of site visits so she could better understand the programs and the people responsible for administering them. She was surprised by the reactions she first got from people who thought she was coming to inspect and audit their work. She explained her job was just to check in and help them make their programs successful. People said to her, "Nobody's ever done that before." Her response was, "Well, it's a new day and it's a new way of doing things."

Laura is only the third person to hold her particular position. The previous people in the position were not social workers. Laura said one of them was actually known for "despising social workers" and the other "knew all the statutes and had been around forever." Neither had spent time building relationships with tribes and understanding the programs and needs they had. Laura said tribal leaders are reporting how much appreciated her attention to their work and willingness to be a resource to them from the state. Laura said this has even influenced other state departments and the way their tribal liaisons are approaching their work. A colleague of hers recently asked, "Are you required to do site visits?" She responded that she wasn't required, but the tribes really like and appreciate it. She said, "They look forward to opportunities to sell themselves and look forward to the feedback of 'wow, that's really innovative' and 'hey we have a

program that can help with that.' Laura's colleague has now replicated the site visit model. Laura said her leadership along with her ability to build relationships, connect policy to people and engage communities is what has made her so effective.

Many of the interviewees do both direct and macro practice, but they are always focusing on the bigger picture and how policy, systems, and environments impact the people they serve. Several are in leadership positions and talked about how their social work perspective also influences their leadership style. Catherine said her interest in leadership was what brought her to macro social work: "When I look back on my career, I always ended up in a leadership role, no matter what, from the time I got out of graduate school. I kept getting promoted into positions that were more and more macro level." Megan, who oversees a team of approximately 350 disaster response volunteers said about her role: "I manage—I don't manage—I come at it from a servant leadership position. My tactic and what I coach our caseworkers, is you don't start with 'we can't help.'" In talking about her position in housing policy reform Frances said her employer "has basically said I'm leading—I'm not even leading; I'm more facilitating and coordinating ... it's their ideas, it's their motivation, it's their work. I'm in the middle of a systems change ... How many people can say that?"

Professional Identification: It's Not a Short Answer

Because of their work with a multitude of professionals and publics, professional identification as a macro social worker can be tricky. As Bethany's story highlighted, how she identifies herself is highly dependent upon whom she is addressing. Bethany and others talked about the different considerations they take into account when deciding

how to identify. These considerations include self-identification, explaining macro social work to others, and the impact of licensure on identification.

Self-identification. All the interviewees said they identify internally as a macro social worker. Amber talked about the many paths she could have chosen to do the same kind of policy work she does today, but it was the intentional choice of getting a social work education which has grounded her within a social work identity. She said, "I'm a social worker, first and foremost, before I'm a grant writer or I'm a program developer, or you know whatever it is." Catherine also said she identifies as a macro social worker, although for her it is related to her job function and current position more than as an overarching professional identity. When asked if she identified as a macro social worker she said, "Yes, but I still have a very clinical piece to me ... Because that's how I can move our mission forward. So I almost feel like that's a huge asset." Part of the challenge of identifying as a social worker is that others don't always connect what they are doing with their own understanding of the field of social work.

Explaining to others. Frances and Catherine, who do identify as macro social workers when talking to others, said people are surprised or confused by the fact that they have an MSW and will ask if they also have a degree in business or public policy. Kaitlin said she internally identifies as a macro social worker, but not when describing herself to others. When talking about her profession, she will describe her job functions, saying something like, "I'm in disaster response, or international development." The reason she does this is because "when I tell people I'm a social worker, they assume one thing and so instead of having to clarify that I'm not that thing you're assuming, I just skip it altogether." Grace also said "as a general rule" she usually identifies by her job

title, rather than saying she is a social worker. When people ask what her background is she'll tell them she has a Master's degree in social work: "But it sometimes confuses people because then they're like, 'why are you a program manager?' It's not that I'm embarrassed to be a social worker, it's just easier to say I'm a program manager."

Similar to Bethany, Jacob and Laura both said they are selective about identifying as social workers and only use the term when talking to others who will understand what it means. Bethany is less likely to identify as a social worker when with other social workers, because she is unlicensed and worries about "getting in trouble." Laura who is licensed, said she is more likely to identify when talking to other social workers: "I mean, it's not a short answer. There are so many aspects to it. It's easier when you're talking to another helper person. There's already that foundational knowledge of what social work is." Laura said even her family doesn't see what she is doing as social work and because of her state position are more likely to say, "Laura is in leadership." She also said sometimes she needs to be careful about the balance between establishing credibility and maintaining humility in her interactions. "I even hesitate like on my business cards or my email signature putting all the letters and licensing and everything. It's a hard decision."

While many of the interviewees avoid having to explain how macro social work is different from more commonly held perceptions about social work; others said they see it as an opportunity to make macro social work more visible. Megan said when she describes her work she will first identify the organization where she works and then her background in social work. If people have questions she will say, "Well, this is what it means."

Amber was even more insistent in her remarks,

> …macro social workers in order to move the discourse along and continue to push back on social work educators, on the community at large, on micro practice social workers, clinicians, anyone who interfaces with macro practice that, 'hey we're still here', right? We still, you know, practice social work, just because it doesn't look like what your work looks like, we're part of this community, we're part of this thing too. And, and if we all just sort of disperse and call ourselves policy analysts or call ourselves program developers and don't continue to really align ourselves as social workers then we're part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Impact of licensure. For many of the interviewees, being able to identify themselves as a social worker was closely connected to being licensed. When I asked Nancy if she identified as a macro social worker she replied, "Very strongly ... especially since I can now legally do that." While licensure was not a requirement for her current position she wanted to be able to legally identify as a social worker, saying, "I'm like no way did I go to school for 6 years to not be able to shake somebody's hand and say, 'Hi, I'm Nancy Smith, social worker.'" Heather said almost the same thing,

> In school you get told all the time you can't identify yourself as a social worker unless you really are. So I take that seriously. So like the other day I made a phone call and I was leaving a message and I'm like, yeah, I'm so and so's social worker. I went through a lot for 4 years, Mary!

On the other side, some of those who were not licensed said they worried about "getting in trouble" for identifying as a social worker. Grace said, "On my signature line, I run the risk, I do have Grace Johnson, MSW, in the hope that I won't have someone from the Board of Social Work say, 'no you must have [a license]'. Kaitlin remarked, "And I'm not doing case management, so I assume I'm not breaking any laws." Frances's perspective was a bit more defiant,

> I will call myself a social worker even though I'm not allowed to technically with them [the board of social work]. I mean, I told this to my intern, too. If you

> really want to be in this world, it's like a badge to not have your license at this point being a macro social worker because you're not adhering to what the system tells you that you need to do.

Professional Regulation

Opinions on licensure for macro social workers were stronger than any other topic discussed during the interviews. Each interviewee made an intentional a decision about becoming licensed, and were evenly split between those with and without a license. Both groups had a variety of reasons for why they chose to pursue or avoid licensure. Among those who were unlicensed, confusion about whether their education and work activities required licensure was prominent. Nearly all of them said the licensure exam was not designed to test macro practice knowledge. Others cited the cost of the exam, licensing fees, CEUs, and supervision as burdensome and unnecessary. Most of them saw the value of licensure for those engaged in clinical practice, but did not think the same public protection goal should be applied to their work. Several said if there were a license specifically for macro social work they would consider being licensed.

Those who were licensed were less strident in their view toward licensure. The primary reason they sought licensure was because it provided a level of credibility to their work and offered assurance to the public they were adhering to ethical practice. They felt licensure was a way to promote macro social work as a legitimate professional practice. Support from their organization for supervision, ongoing education and financial assistance was also cited as a reason for pursuing licensure.

Unlicensed macro social workers.

There's no clear path. The majority of those interviewed were not licensed. While some were very intentional about this, others said they avoided it because the

whole process seemed confusing or they had been told their job functions did not constitute social work. Both Bethany and Kaitlin said they wished they had known more about licensure before getting their MSW. Kaitlin said,

> I mean it's a confusing world in the first place. It just seemed so all over the board of 'I got my license and I do direct practice' to 'I don't have my license and I don't even do social work.' So there's no clear path for this. I still don't understand it and I guess I've just put that in the camp of I don't need to understand it because I'm not licensed and I'm not planning on getting licensed.

Elizabeth said she used to be a huge proponent of licensure for social workers. However, after finishing her MSW she applied for advanced licensure while working in the county welfare office and the board of social work rejected her application saying she had to prove "why this is social work." She decided not to appeal, despite having been previously licensed and completing the required supervision. She was angry and said, "I was like, 'no I am not gonna fucking appeal you.' And that was it. I've never gone back." Amber, who is now licensed, had a similar experience in her first job after graduate school where the board told her, after she took the test and paid her licensure fee, she was not practicing social work. Amber did appeal and eventually was awarded her license.

When I followed up with Isaac to ask about licensure he said this had become a contentious issue in his office. One of his colleagues said he should be reported to the board for practicing without a license, especially because he was supervising an MSW intern. Isaac asked me if I knew whether he was in violation. This questioning occurred with other interviewees who weren't sure if they could put MSW on their business card or even tell people they had an MSW because of fear they would be in violation of their state's licensing laws. After looking up for Isaac the social work licensing state statute, I

reported to him I thought a case could be made either way. He said he might go through the process because he felt guilty and confused, but wasn't happy about having to do so.

Which of these is macro practice? Both those who took the licensure exam, as well as those who hadn't, talked about the exam being too micro focused. Similar to what Bethany said about studying to the exam, Grace said, "The test I've heard from multiple people is like 90% focused on micro issues with a lot of it being clinical. So I don't feel comfortable with being licensed in something where I would literally have to teach myself ..." In a similar vein, Kaitlin said,

> But I did have some macro practice friends that did do it and said that ... there was one macro practice question and it said 'Which of these is macro practice?' It was multiple choice and he said 'all of them, they're all macro practice.' So it was kind of a joke.

Frances, who took the exam for her undergraduate license, but not after finishing her MSW, said she could probably pass the exam and wouldn't mind studying for it, but because it is about "academic policies and best practices… there's not a single macro question on that test" she refuses to engage in the process. Megan, who took the exam, but is no longer licensed, seemed to confirm Grace's, Kaitlin's, and Frances's suppositions: "There were three questions that had to do with macro practice and one of them was 'define macro practice.' It's embarrassing."

I don't have the time or money for this. Along with the confusion over the licensure requirements and the focus on micro practice knowledge of the licensing exam, interviewees said the cost of the exam, the annual licensing fee, cost of supervision and CEUs was burdensome and provided little benefit. Isaac said he is not licensed because

he feels the process is only geared toward direct practice and the "costs and required supervision hours are a scam." Frances commented,

> I would need to pay a lot of money… The money part really bugs me. The supervision part really bugs me too because everybody I've talked to, it's like they're making it work. But again, you pay for it, and it's time and it's like if people were doing it on their own to … really better ourselves as social workers, cool. But because they [board of social work] said you must, I just disagree with that entire premise. I feel like it keeps people like me and the rest of my classmates that chose macro practice out of identifying as social workers, which is bullshit.

Megan, who had her license, let it lapse (at least she thinks it's lapsed) because the person who provided her supervision, at no charge, was no longer available and she couldn't find another macro social work supervisor. She said she "did the math and to get the rest of my hours it was going to cost me like $2,000. And we wanted to start a family and … I thought, I don't have the time or money for this."

Along with the burden of costs and time, Megan and others like Bethany and Kaitlin said the cost of the license was not paid by their employer and wasn't a requirement for their current position. Megan said, "I was employed at [organization] at that time…they weren't going to subsidize it and pay it. Again, I understand why; I just didn't have the luxury of a job where this license was needed." Kaitlin also said it was not required by her employers, and her boss, who is also an MSW, does not have his license.

Appropriate for clinical. As was explored above, most of the unlicensed macro social workers said the reason they did not pursue licensure was because they felt it was designed to protect the public from social workers engaged in clinical or direct practice.

Several of them said they supported licensure for these social workers. Isaac wrote to me,

> I understand the importance and need for social work licensure for direct practice. Licensure protects the clients who receive services and protects the profession. Licensure defines the scope of practice that distinguishes social workers from psychologists, therapists and others. There is not the need to protect the public from social work macro practice as there is in the client–provider relationship.

Megan also spoke to the importance of licensure for the profession, especially for those engaged in clinical work: "I appreciate the desire to professionalize with the license… I struggle though, when I am very clearly not doing mental health work. Mental health workers, psychologists, psychiatrists ... independent social workers ... you are affecting someone's mental health."

Macro practice license. Along with supporting licensure for direct and clinically focused social workers, some of the unlicensed interviewees said they would consider licensure if there was an option for those who are doing macro social work, or if the exam was more inclusive of macro social work content. Kaitlin and Megan both said they would "absolutely" become licensed if it was geared toward macro social work. Kaitlin said she would have done it immediately after finishing her MSW. Megan said she could "definitely get behind" a macro practice license. She said she really appreciated the supervision aspect of having a license, but for macro practice it is just too "onerous." Jacob and Frances both said they would consider licensure if there was a macro practice option. Frances said, "If they acknowledge macro social work is a real live thing and if they have a test that would have me be licensed as a macro practice social worker ..." Jacob was a bit more skeptical, saying he would need to understand better "what the point of it was" before deciding if that was something he would do.

It's interesting to note when discussing licensure, several of the respondents compared the professionalization process in social work with the process in other fields. This was not a point I asked specifically, but was brought up by the participants as an alternative way of considering how to change the regulatory framework for social work. For example, Grace talked about her husband's profession of engineering and the model they use to license graduate engineers,

> ... you take a test after graduation and you get this temporary license essentially, and then you need like 4 years of professional experience and you take another test. Both of those tests are tailored to a particular field. Engineering, like social work, has many sects to it. So he is a water resource engineer. He's not expected to know what a civil engineer, structures engineer is supposed to do. It has small sections on it, but the whole test isn't about computer engineering.

Jacob suggested the field of social work look to the public health framework as a model for practice. Megan suggested a model like nursing. Frances said the social work licensure exam could be like the bar exam, but "they need to make it better and worth our while in the best interest of those that we're serving." Isaac wrote,

> One can attend law school, decide not to be a licensed attorney, and hold the same professional jobs a macro social worker can. Same with Masters of Public Health or Masters of Public Policy. None of these degrees mandate licensure just because of the degree they hold.

Licensed macro social workers.

Credibility. Among those macro social workers who were licensed, credibility of the license was one on the main reasons they pursued licensure. The tribal social services agency Laura worked for was supportive of licensure, although she said this wasn't the case in other agencies, and she could tell "that difference of who's licensed and who's not." She said having a license proved to her workers and colleagues that she had the skill set to practice social work and process ethical dilemmas professionally. She said,

"There's that almost perceived inferiority if you don't have a license ... it's almost invalidating because it's like, 'oh she doesn't have a license. Hm." Laura also finds herself having to remind other professionals, such as attorneys, that social workers are licensed and therefore subject to the same ethical requirements: "As you're viewing a new law for [Tribe], their code of ethics applies to professions that require licensure." Once she had established herself as an expert in child welfare and had her MSW and social work license, attorneys in her department would be strategic about using her as an expert witness "because I'm credentialed and I'm known as an expert throughout the state." Heather, who also works with several other licensed professionals, finds having her license gives her authority when running team meetings or working within the legal system: "I'm also tasked with doing all the legal paperwork for somebody, like a motion to terminate ... briefing the judge."

Organizational support. Along with credibility, support of the organization seemed to be an important aspect to those who became licensed. Both Laura and Nancy said their organization helped pay for their licensure, CEU and supervision costs. Laura said at the tribal social service agency she worked they increased pay for licensed providers. While Catherine is clinically licensed, it is clear licensure is an important priority within her organization. She provides supervision groups onsite and said the teacher in her loves to provide professional development to enhance the consultation and services they offer and move other social workers toward independent practice.

An Evolving Understanding of Professional Identity

One of the final questions I asked most interviewees was how they thought their view of macro social work had changed since they first decided to pursue it as a career.

This seemed to be a particularly challenging question for respondents to answer. Kaitlin's response encapsulates the most common initial reply, which was: "I guess a part of me feels like it hasn't, but the other part feels like it's changed so much that I can't put into words how much it's changed! That's a contradiction!" Kaitlin and others described their journey as an evolution in their understanding of both social work as a whole and how macro social work fits as a part of that whole. Many acknowledged the messiness of trying to define macro social work as something separate from other areas of practice. Nancy said,

> I kind of always thought that it would be like 100% macro practice, you know? But now I see there are a lot of ways that you can work macro practice into a more micro or mezzo type of position, which is what I do. So it's never as simple as 'I'm going to do macro practice and I'm never going to work with clients, or I only want to work for clients and I'm never going to advocate for larger scale change. It's like you've got to do both. It's never like a clear—it's always blurred, all of the levels.

Amber, Heather and Laura all talked about how their macro social work education and practice have given them both a vocabulary and a knowledge base to act upon their initial, but ambiguous, desires to help people and engage in social change. Laura said,

> I think being able to label it macro practice because I think this is stuff that I've always been interested in. I've always been a helper. I've always been interested in government and policy. Now I have a label of what to call it ... the best way to change things is being downtown at the capitol influencing policy.

Heather, rather graphically, compared her direct practice work in corrections to her "exponentially" changed view of macro social work to a wart,

> It's like when you're a kid and you have a wart or something. You don't tell your mom for a while and it's there. If you don't get what's behind it, it'll keep coming back. That's kind of how I think of this. It's like you're just sitting there babysitting this thing that pops up and it's just there and you don't know what's behind it. Then when you get into macro practice, way the other side, you're just

> sitting there like, 'oh my God, seriously, THAT'S what's on the other side. That's why you guys keep coming back.'

Similar to Bethany's response in the opening vignette of this section, other respondents said the concrete knowledge, skills and values of macro social work had become more integrated into their everyday practice. They are less conscious of how their practice is informed by their education or experience as it has become an intrinsic part of who they are and what they do. Grace summarized this well when she said, "... it's not always at the front of my mind that 'oh this is social work.' Sometimes if I'm talking with my colleagues, the social worker in me is saying, 'we really need to be looking at the person and environment.'"

Who Takes It On?

As we discussed how her views of macro practice had changed, Grace said, "Hmm, how have they changed? [long pause, thinking] I didn't make this connection until now. We're not very visible." She went on to discuss how lucky she feels to have developed an informal network of other macro social workers because support for her macro social work is not readily apparent or visible. Laura stated, "Even today, the realization that I should probably call myself that [a social worker] more often than I actually do because the only way to change perception is to let people know and educate them." Many respondents seemed to feel this way. They acknowledged being frustrated by the status of macro practice social work and knew declaring their macro social work identity may be one way of changing perceptions of what it means to be a social worker. However, at the same time, they felt the issue was much larger and would be more appropriately addressed by the institutions charged with promoting and supporting social

work education and practice. They, themselves, didn't desire, feel ready, or have the energy to engage in such a large-scale effort.

Analysis of Post-formal Socialization Findings

In Miller's (2010) framework, post-formal socialization is defined as the time after formal socialization to the profession through retirement (p. 10). The worker's engagement and situational adaptation to the work and volunteer settings is what comprises this stage. In this study, it appears macro practice social workers must adapt to settings which are mostly void of other social work professionals. While some struggled to find jobs related to their interest and education, all of them are currently in positions doing the kind of work they envisioned.

All of the interviewees identify internally as macro practice social workers and believe they offer a unique perspective and skill set, but struggle with declaring this identification to others. State regulation, lack of collegial and institutional support, and dominant, but misinformed perceptions of what social workers do, are the main barriers to this identification. For those who are licensed, this is less of a tension, although they too struggle with having to explaining to others the connection between their degree and their job function. Many of the participants choose not to engage in this discussion and instead identify through their work position. Others see it as an opportunity for furthering the discourse on what social work is and the important role macro practitioners play.

The key thing interviewees wish they'd known before entering formal socialization was the myriad options available for macro practice social workers. While all of them were employed in macro practice positions and were employing the skills and

knowledge they gained through their graduate school experience; many had to start in direct service positions before moving into macro practice social work. There were varying opinions on whether the time in micro practice social work was beneficial or simply a process they had to endure. During the job search, figuring out how to sell their qualifications to potential employers was one of the biggest challenges, and one they didn't feel their MSW program adequately prepared them to encounter.

Once securing a position, several of the interviewees found themselves in work environments without fellow macro practice social workers. In order to maintain connection to the profession and receive the support and professional development them wanted, many relied on informal networks, usually made of up of their previous classmates. Only a few were involved in formal macro practice social work networks or organizations. Those not involved in these formal networks were not even aware they existed or had not taken the time to explore them more fully.

While often isolating, not having social work colleagues means these macro practice social workers are continuously engaged in interdisciplinary work. Involvement in this work requires them to draw from their specific social work knowledge and frameworks. This is one place where interviewees could see how social work values and training were valuable and unique. It also requires leadership and the ability to see intersections between micro, mezzo and macro systems; understanding the importance of the impact systemic decisions have on the individual client, family, or worker.

While often drawing from their social work training, many don't identify themselves as social workers when talking or working with others. For some this issue is because state regulations require licensure of social workers and they have not undergone

the licensure process. For others, it is a matter of not wanting to explain how the kind of social work they do is different from what most people perceive it to be. They find it easier to simply identify by their job title or function. On the other hand, some of the macro practice social workers said they welcome the opportunity to explain why macro practice is a part of what social workers do.

Licensure of macro practice social workers is often a thorny subject. Just over half of the interviewees are not licensed. When discussing why they aren't licensed, emotional responses ranged from indifference to anger. For those more apathetic, licensure is something that doesn't apply to them. It is not required for their job and doesn't make sense for them to pursue. Others described the process as overly complex, expensive, and purposely exclusive of their knowledge and skill set. Those who were licensed felt it was a badge of honor, improved the credibility of the profession and also had organizational support for seeking and maintaining their license. When asked if their views would change if there were a macro practice license, some were supportive while others were more skeptical this would not change the visibility or credibility of their work.

Despite acknowledging the desire for increased visibility and support of macro practice social work, many of the interviewees didn't seem interested in leading the charge. Some were actively involved in these efforts, but more often they were overwhelmed with their job, volunteer, and personal obligations to dedicate large amounts of time or effort. At least two of the respondents realized during the interview they may have a larger duty to promote and sell macro practice social work in an effort to change perceptions and influence the perspective of others with whom they interact.

This understanding of being responsible for the status of the field often came during the final question I asked of interviewees. Specifically, I asked them how their own perspective of macro practice social work has changed. This was a broad question which many hadn't considered before. Beyond focusing on their own socialization, they began to consider the professional socialization of other upcoming practitioners and how that would be possible in today's environment.

More often than not, the response on how their perspective had changed was one in which they felt their understanding had both increased and not increased, at the same time. Respondents talked about a deepening of their understanding and likened it to a journey or evolution. Others said they now had vocabulary and frameworks for things they intuitively understood before, but now hand language to articulate. Along with language, also came acknowledgment macro practice social work is complicated and doesn't encompass one meaning. Developing comfort with the ambiguity of social work practice and integrating their understanding of its multilayers was one of the most significant examples of how macro practice social workers demonstrated Miller's (2010) concept of *situational adaptation*.

Like the previous stages, the post-formal socialization stage is complex and multivaried. Macro practice social workers are learning how to be professionals, but their identity with the social work profession is more tenuous. Professional regulation, perception of what social work entails, and ambiguity of practice all play significant roles in the shaping of this identity. Chapter 9 discusses the final conclusions and implications of the professional socialization process and its impact at both the individual and profession of social work as a whole.

Chapter 9

Discussion, Implications and Continuing Questions

Miller's (2010) model proved useful for exploring the professional socialization experiences of macro practice social workers. Findings from my study indicated professional socialization is influenced by both elements of structural functionalism (Merton et al., 1957) as well as symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). The structure of social work education certainly served the function of socializing students, especially at the MSW level, into the values, knowledge and skills they needed to enter the professional workforce. The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism also allowed me to better understand how the respondents moved through and took on their professional roles. These roles were influenced by their previous experiences, the meaningful people they encountered, and the dissonance they faced when trying to take on their professional identity.

As the findings emerged, a circular pattern of professional socialization seemed more appropriate than Miller's (2010) more linear model. Miller's model focuses on the individual's professional socialization, taking into account a multitude of factors, such as the environment, meaningful people, knowledge, and practice context. Miller's developmental approach was helpful in understanding the socialization of macro practice social workers; however, what emerged even more strongly from the study participant narratives was the interconnectedness they had with other macro practice social workers. Within each stage, the identification of other macro practice social workers was mentioned as key to their professional development. In addition to a developmental model of socialization, it appears one of the most critical factors to the professional

socialization of macro practice social workers is their exposure to other macro practice social workers. While this may seem self-evident, the language used by those in the study denotes a sense of "discovery" when they find a macro practice social worker. They were not prominent in the context of this study's participants' lives. As I began to display my findings, a cyclical model emerged which takes into account these interconnections (see Figure 2) within each stage of professional socialization. The cyclical model can start at any location. I choose to start with the idea that roles models are significant at every stage.

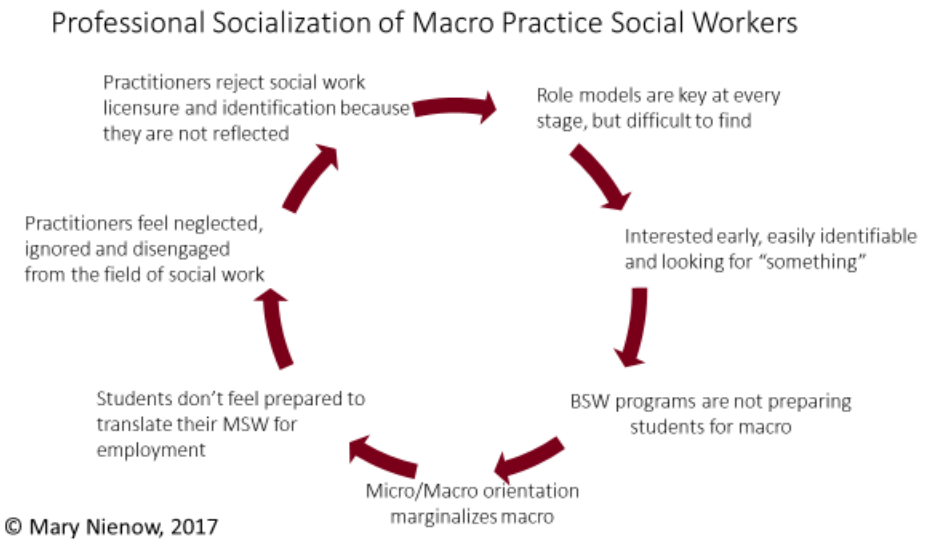

Figure 2. Professional socialization of macro practice social workers.

Starting in the upper right part of the circle, we can conclude from this study, role models were significant at every stage of the process, but not always easy for potential professionals to discover. This is a critically important finding because we know role models are key to career selection (Hanson & McCullagh, 1995; Quimby & DeSantis,

2006; Whitaker and Arrington, 2008). Moving down in the circle we can see those who are currently engaged in macro practice social work were interested in social change issues at very early ages. They were involved in questioning unfair rules and served in leadership roles. They all described searching for ways to channel these interests in high school and during their undergraduate experiences; which included involvement in social action, community service, and issue politics, such as LGBTQ rights. For those who did not get a BSW, their majors were in closely aligned fields such as Political Science, International Affairs, and Family Social Sciences.

Moving around the circle, the model describes a major challenge for emerging macro practice social workers. Participants' stories highlighting not feeling their programs prepared them to engage in macro practice social work. Respondents indicated Social Work education programs focused on preparing students for micro level practice. They described not having macro practice opportunities when it came to assignments or internships and many engaged in social justice activities through their minor programs (such as Women's Studies) or other campus organizations did not connect these passions to their undergraduate social work program. This finding is further supported by the literature which has shown a predominant focus on micro practice training at the BSW level (Haynes & Mickelson, 2010; Ritter, 2008; Rothman, 2013; Wolk, Pray, Weismuller & Dempsey, 1996). In her study on the political participation of licensed social workers (both BSW and MSW), Ritter (2008) found nearly half of respondents felt their social work program, "did not adequately prepare them for engaging with the political system, and almost two-thirds of respondents favored working with individuals over working on societal change." Given what we know from symbolic interactionism, meaning and

learning are best achieved through interaction with significant others as well as through efficacious experiences (Blumer, 1969). Lack of these important people and experiences means those interested in macro practice activity may rely on models outside the field of social work. While this study focused on the stories of those who eventually became macro practitioners, it is likely that many in BSW programs may become micro practitioners simply because they are not provided with opportunity to explore and learn about macro practice. Within the field, undergraduate students' interest and desires for professional macro practice are seen as aberrant, or at least divergent from the standard way social work is "meant" to be practiced and understood.

The next phase of the circle represents entrance to the MSW program (which corresponds in this study with Miller's [2010] formal socialization stage). All of the participants who specialized in macro practice expressed feeling a division between micro- and macro-interested students almost immediately and experienced marginalization as macro-interested students. This division is also supported by research (Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005; Makaros & Weiss-Gal, 2014) which has shown students either come to or shortly develop a clear preference for one mode of social work practice over another. Often cohorts will feel the other mode of practice isn't addressing "the real problem" (Austin et al., 2005, p. 16), causing schisms rather than collaboration between cohorts of students. This study illuminated how language and experience often worked to support schisms, with macro practice students often discussing how micro practice students were too sensitive or politically correct. Respondents in this study also felt their MSW programs placed less value on the macro practice specializations through an

overreliance on adjunct instructors, lack of class or specialization options (as compared to those in clinical practice), and requirements for micro level field placements.

Moving through the circle into what would have been the post-formal socialization stage of Miller's (2010) model, for those who did specialize in macro practice in their MSW, respondents had a general sense of not feeling prepared to translate their education and skill set in a way which helped future employers understand the relevance of their MSW. Despite this, all interviewees ended up in satisfying macro practice social work positions.

The majority of those I spoke to said they continue to feel neglected, ignored and disengaged from the profession of social work. This has resulted in many of them rejecting social work licensure and professional identification because they are not seeing themselves reflected in the field. This disengagement from professional identification was also found in studies of macro practice social workers done by Lightfoot et al. (2016) and Wagner (1989). The lack of identification brings us full circle in the model where h role models are difficult for those in the pre-socialization stage to find, and the circle begins again with young people inspired to engage in social action looking for "something" upon which to attach their desire and hope for social change.

This model, adapted from Miller's (2010) framework of the professional socialization of social workers, captures the stories and experiences macro practice social workers in this study shared. These findings are supported by previous research showing macro practice social work continues to be constructed as a fringe element within the social work profession. Critical factors in this construction include the ongoing diminishment of macro social work in both educational programs and professional

practice within the field. This relegation to the sidelines of the profession reinforces the low visibility and standing of these practitioners; resulting in a self-perpetuating circle of marginalization impacting the professional socialization of potential and future social work professionals.

Discussion

This study is unique in its look at the professional socialization experiences of macro practice social workers. While other researchers (Boehm & Cohen, 2013; Bogo et al., 1995; Choi et al., 2015; Rubin et al., 1986; Segal-Engelchin et al., 2008; Weiss et al., 2004) have been interested in specific components of the professional socialization of these practitioners, such as the formal socialization or post-socialization stages of professional development, my study explores these phases as well as the pre-socialization experiences of current macro practice social workers. The findings demonstrate the meaning these professionals make of their journey and how their experiences have influenced their own professional identity. Some of the most salient themes discussed below include, managing the dominant perspective of micro practice within the field of social work along with a lack of support for their interest within formal education; the necessity of role models and mentors; an early and strong interest in issues of social justice; a breadth of employment options; their struggle with professional identification, including requirements for licensure, and their role in changing the way social work is perceived, taught and practiced.

Micro before Macro

A great deal of the discourse in this study was on the concept of *micro before macro*. Practitioners talked about the bias they experienced in this regard during both

their social work education and within their professional practice. Despite no research within the field indicating micro practice *before* macro practice is the most efficacious model, the dominance of the model in social work education, regulation, and practice is well documented (Reisch & Andrews, 2002; Austin et al., 2005; Hill et al., 2010; Neugeboren, 1986; Rothman, 2014; Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). It is disconcerting that despite building all major institutional models around this structure, we don't actually know if it is effective. Future research in this regard may help to illuminate the strengths or weaknesses of this prevalent pedagogical, regulatory and occupational practice.

This study shows the very real consequences of not examining the underlying "micro before macro" assumption. Interviewees talked about the isolation they felt as students, as well as practitioners. This supports the work of many others who found macro practice social workers feel a lack of understanding and recognition of their legitimate place within the profession (Barak, Travis, & Bess, 2004; Ezell et al., 2004; Fisher & Corciullo, 2011; Gibelman, 1999; Gitterman, 2014; Hartnett, Harding, & Scanlon, 2005; Hill et al. 2010; Lightfoot et al., 2016). It also hearkens back to the historical tensions of the field in which macro practice social workers have been systematically discounted and marginalized (Reisch & Andrews, 2002; Davis, 1984; Lane, 1939; Lurie, 1959; Wenocur & Reisch, 1989) Despite the profession's rhetoric of embracing a dual mission to support both individual and social change, it is clear from my study and the work of others (Reisch & Andrews, 2002; Davis, 1984; Healy, 2000; Payne, 2006; Wenocur & Reisch, 1989) that the dominant model of social work is micro practice; macro practice operates as merely a fringe element. My study suggests the impact of this isolation and "othering" leads macro practice social workers to minimize

their professional identify and eschew any interest in trying to change public or professional perceptions about what it means to be a social worker. This lack of identification and lack of desire to change the dominant discourse around social work practice then leads to less visible role models available to potential new macro practice social workers.

Role Models

Role models and mentors were found to be key for every respondent within this study. This reflects the theoretical perspective of Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, in that young people aspire to emulate the significant people within their lives and more likely to find meaning in their experiences when guided by these significant others. Hill et al. (2010) describe the need for networking and mentoring for macro practice social workers as the impetus for development of the Association of Macro Practice Social Workers in Minnesota, but no other study has specifically investigated the importance of role models and mentors for macro practice social workers. Like with the micro before macro bias, it is especially perplexing this area of research has not been further examined.

There has been a given the plethora of research looking at the pivotal role significant people played in creating awareness of micro practice social work. For example, Hanson and McCullagh (1995) discovered in a 10-year retrospective study of BSW students 61% of them said they first became aware of social work as a profession through high school courses, guidance counselors or social services offered to them or their family. In a workforce survey of over 3000 members of NASW across the U.S., Whitaker and Arrington (2008) asked who most influenced their selection of social work

as a career. After the category of "Other" (which was not defined by Whitaker and Arrington, 2008), a social worker was the second most selected choice. As we saw in the analysis of the new model which developed from this study, lack of identification with the profession of social work by macro social work practitioners is a significant concern when it comes to role models and mentors for potential new practitioners. There is no systemic way for young people interested in social change or community level practice to identify the models and mentors they clearly need. It remains unclear as to the impact this has on those who might aspire to the field of social work.

Early Interest in Social Justice

Another significant finding was nearly all of the respondents were involved in social action at very young ages, and came to social work with an interest in pursuing their interest in community and systems work. This is similar to other studies which have shown early and strong interest in social justice or community practice among macro practice social work students and practitioners (Byers & Stone, 1999; Bogo et al., 1995; Koeske, Lichtenwalter & Koeske, 2005; Mizrahi & Dodd, 2013; Segal-Engelchin & Kaufman, 2008). The interviewees for this study were driven, passionate leaders, long before reaching their formal socialization stage. This means they were easily identifiable and could have been mentored and guided toward macro practice social work much earlier than any of them were. The lack of a systematic or institutional presence in these social action issues represents both a lost opportunity for growing the profession and a significant abdication of responsibility for the profession.

What this study doesn't explore are the number of individuals who may also have been interested and active in social justice issues at young ages, but chose to pursue

education in fields other than social work, such as law, education, public health, philosophy, political science, public policy, nonprofit management or even business management. Other authors have highlighted the unfounded reasons students are counseled into direct practice concentrations, such as lack of job opportunities for macro practice social workers, competition with other fields, lack of recognition of social work as a viable degree for this type of work, and direct practice licensing requirements (Barak et al., 2004; Ezell et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2010; Martin, Pine, & Healy, 1999). The lack of macro practitioners in social work therefore reinforces preparation for these other fields is outside the scope of "traditional" social work practice.

Lack of Support in Formal Socialization

Currently, the 2015 CSWE competencies require undergraduate programs demonstrate their students are competent in nine areas of practice. Seven out of nine of these competencies require application at a macro practice level. For example, Competency 3 requires students "Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice." However, if we examine the sites where students are completing their social work internships (CSWE, 2015), it is questionable how many of them are gaining enough experience to demonstrate any competency in this area. This gap is especially troubling given we know building a sense of self-efficacy among students in macro practice is effective at increasing their commitment to future macro practice (Boehm & Cohen, 2013; Han & Chow, 2010; Perry, 1999; Sather, Weitz, & Carlson, 2007; Weiss, Gal, & Katan, 2006). In this study, many of the participants with a BSW did gain macro practice social work during their internship, 3 out of 4 of them described

the difficulty they had creating the internship and having to work, often outside of the formal social work program structure, in order to have this opportunity.

Similarly, at the MSW level, respondents described having to create their own macro practice internships or settle for less than ideal placements. Interviewees also described feeling secondary, or like their concentration was just an "add-on" to the "real" purpose of the MSW program which was to train clinical and direct practice social workers. The use of adjunct faculty, while appreciated for their practical knowledge and experience, also seemed to signal to many of the respondents less of a value being placed upon those macro practice courses. All of the difficulties described occurred at schools which offered an MSW with a macro practice specialization. Unfortunately, these findings are also supported by the literature (Martin et al., 1999; Neugeboren, 1986; Rothman, 2013) and mirror the historical development of the field (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989).

Finally, the role of the cohort model was found to be a significant source of support and mentorship. This indicates programs are doing a good job of bringing together students with a variety of experiences and similar objectives when it comes to their career goals. Participants, however, immediately identified tension between their cohort and those on the clinical or direct practice tracks. Austin et al. (2005) in an assessment of the domains of social work practice, confirm some of these tensions between micro and macro social work students and practitioners do exist and attribute the tension to a difference in the language, theoretical perspectives and problem-solving approaches of the two groups. These differences also lead to a lack of communication between the two cohorts as they see their roles, their work, and their interactions as

operating within different spheres not connected to one another. Finally, the differentiation in roles and the lack of communication between the two leads to a lack of knowledge and appreciation for the other (Austin et al., 2005).

Professional Identification

Many of the interviewees commented on the breadth of employment options available to them after completing their MSW. This contradicts one of the more dominant narratives in professional social work that there is not a market for macro practice social work positions (Barak et al., 2004). Difficulty finding desired employment was discussed by respondents, but this didn't seem to be of a significant magnitude to prevent individuals in my study from finding meaningful employment doing macro practice social work

The more common struggle for currently practicing professionals was tension over their identification as a social worker, especially when it came to their public identification. This finding supports the work done by Lightfoot et al. (2016) in which the majority of macro practice social workers "sometimes or rarely" publicly identified themselves as a social worker. Hill et al. (2010) also recognized this issue and described a state-level effort to try and bring macro practice social workers together, but describe only the inception of their association and not the long- term outcomes.

While interviewees in this study seemed to identify more strongly with social work during the formal socialization period, entering the workplace changed that for many. This finding is remarkably similar to the one Wagner (1989) made nearly thirty years ago. In studying the professional outcomes of social workers of the 1960s and '70s, Wagner (1989) found many of the professionals maintained their idealism and

passion for social justice issues, but did so at the sacrifice of their professional identification. Losing a network of like-minded peers and mentors meant having to navigate professional identity without those supports. Ritter (2008) in looking at political action by social workers found being part of a professional association was a significant predictor of political participation by social workers. She posits these networks help provide psychological resources and exposure to others in similar situations (Ritter, 2008). Losing these resources means the new social work professional is no longer an engaged member of their association, moving further away from seeing their profession as a source of support, knowledge or identity.

In this study, interviewees had a desire for greater recognition of their social work identity by others, and even within their own profession, but many of the interviewees have chosen to focus on their work and personal lives rather than taking up the task of trying to defend and explain the value of macro practice social work. They talked about how engaging in these discussions takes a great deal of work and doesn't feel important enough for many them to spend their time, energy or resources. However, as our conversation progressed, they seemed to move away from a focus on the benefit of recognition for themselves and recognized the benefit their identification might have for other current or future macro practice social workers. Beyond those referenced above (Hill et al., 2010; Ritter, 2008), none of the professional socialization literature has identified or considered the impact of isolation on macro practice social workers' professional identity.

Licensure

Regulation is also impacting professional identity and serving as a barrier to macro practice social work. In this study, participants who were not licensed feared calling themselves a social worker because of the legal ramifications. They were confused by the licensing process and relied upon what they had heard from peers to inform their understanding. Some of them shared stories of attending meetings with from the Board of Social Work where they felt "bullied" into becoming licensed.

Their concerns around licensing are not unfounded. In a review of social work licensure throughout the U.S., Plitt Donaldson et al. (2014), found a vast array of complicated and varying regulations from state to state. Legal definitions of what constitutes "social work" vary from state to state, an example of the statutory definition of social work in Minnesota can be found in Appendix A. Licensing boards of social work are sometimes stand-alone entities and other times are combined with other professional regulatory entities (e.g., in Wisconsin) the social work board is called the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board (2015). Plitt Donaldson et al. (2014), also note,

> The growing hegemony of clinical social work may create a public perception that clinical social work is the only "legitimate" form of social work practice. If the majority of social workers in a given geographic area are holding only a license for clinical practice, then it is increasingly unlikely that potential social workers or social work employers will recognize macro practice as an area of either educational or professional specialization. (p. 8)

If the current status quo continues, as it has for the last 100 years, the profession of social work will either continue to alienate and isolate its macro practice social workers (Haynes, 1998) or push them out of the profession completely (Wagner, 1989).

As it stands today, only a minority of individuals enter the field in order to engage in macro practice social work (Pritzker & Applewhite, 2015). Practitioners in this study described, almost universally, a process of "discovering" macro practice social work by chance. Outside of their formal socialization, none of them were aware of national efforts to include and engage macro practice social workers within the profession; and only a small number knew of local or state networks for macro practice social workers. Operating from the arguable assumption neither isolation nor loss of the macro practice side of social work is desirable, I believe the implications outlined in the next section are imperative for the future of macro practice social work in the United States.

Implications and Continuing Questions

This study focused on the narratives of becoming a macro social worker, with an explicit focus on the pre, formal and post-formal socializations experiences as described by Miller (2010). The purpose of this study was to better understand the lived experiences of social workers engaging in macro practice and understand how those experiences shaped their own understanding of professional identity. The implications of these experiences are such that significant institutional changes are required in order to more fully integrate and support the professional socialization of these practitioners. This requires a serious examination of the profession's aspirational values versus its lived practice at the educational, policy, research and practice levels. New and continuing questions are raised in an effort to begin this process.

Pre-socialization

As this study highlights, there are a number of critical junctures where macro practice social work could be introduced, strengthened and elevated. Introducing the

concept of social work as a way to professionally meet their social change aspirations could help young people identify a viable career trajectory. This may also help avoid some of the "groping in the dark" many of the interviewees described they did before finding macro practice social work.

Introducing the idea of social work as a professional path for those already on the fringes of dominant culture, who recognize the need for social change, and whose perspectives not always heard within the field, is absolutely critical. Many of the interviewees described their involvement in LGBTQ issues, homelessness, environmentalism, student government and politics in middle school, high school, and college. Our social work institutions—schools, professional associations, and regulatory bodies—need to have a greater presence and role in the places where these students are active. For example, why doesn't NASW or local schools of social work sponsor GSA's, History Days, or Environmental Clubs where young people are already engaging in the work which the profession claims to be its priority and purview?

College catalogues, program websites and recruiting material describing social work must include descriptions of macro practice as an integral part of the profession. Several of the interviewees described reading descriptions of macro practice when they were applying for graduate school (and in Isaac's case, his BSW) and feeling an immediate connection to the language describing their passions.

Similarly, our current instructional practices must match the accreditation standards currently in place (CSWE, 2015). A number of studies (Ezell et al., 2004; Koerin, Reeves, & Rosenblum, 2000; Miller et al., 2008; Neugeboren, 1986; Rothman, 2013) and CSWE (2015) educational data, along with the experiences shared by

participants in this study, have shown a distinct micro focus within the social work curriculum and field experiences of students, especially at the BSW level. Macro practice belongs in the content of every course and field experience of social work students. It is a vibrant and current part of the profession, despite its marginalized status (Rothman, 2013). While descriptions of settlement houses are interesting and certainly a part of the history of social work, they are often taught in a unidimensional way which minimizes the role of social, racial and economic justice being done by non-European populations. Focusing on this narrow story of macro practice social work without connection to the present work being done by macro practice social workers connotes it as a relic of the past without meaning for current or future practitioners. How could BSW and MSW programs introduce models and stories of those who are currently doing the work as a way to inspire individuals to enter into and see the value of macro practice?

Macro practice content also needs to be integrated into micro practice courses so students can understand the connections between the two and how their micro practice skill set can be translated into a larger practice setting; especially at the BSW and MSW foundation levels. Social work instructors must consider more fully the learning needs and professional interests of all students in their classroom, not just those who want to "help people" on an individual basis. CSWE data (2007–2015) consistently shows approximately 6–10% of students are interested in macro practice social work. It is the responsibility of the instructor, not the students interested in macro practice, to develop appropriate and flexible assignments for the learning needs of all their students. Similar to the way Schools of Social Work have begun to acknowledge and design courses which incorporate cultural diversity, faculty should acknowledge and incorporate macro practice

readings, case studies, assignments, guest lecturers and macro practice experiential learning into their generalist curriculum, and not just within the last two to three courses of the undergraduate program, but throughout all social work courses and field experiences. The current approach appears to be setting students interested in macro practice social work as somehow not a part of the "norm," marginalizing them from the very beginning of their socialization process. What would happen if macro practice concepts and processes were embedded throughout BSW and MSW programs?

Along these lines, social work programs wanting to improve the macro practice competency of their students should consider also requiring macro practice experiences as a part of the BSW or MSW Foundation curriculum so efficacy can be built. Boehm and Cohen (2013) found building efficacy in macro practice was one of the key ways for increasing commitment to macro practice social work among undergraduate social work students. According to participants in this study, there appears to be much greater focus on building efficacy when it comes to micro practice skills and settings, but much less attention paid to similar macro practice skills and settings. This was also evidenced by the lack of options for macro practice field options described by participants at both the BSW and MSW level. Developing more robust macro practice field placements can help to increase the visibility of social work within nontraditional organizations and have a synergistic effect of elevating the social work program's reputation and the desire for macro practice social workers within interdisciplinary settings. It also would serve the purpose of helping students meet the macro practice competencies social work programs are required to demonstrate by CSWE for their accreditation (CSWE, 2015).

Formal Socialization

If we consider specifically the formal socialization for macro practice at the MSW level, a number of recommendations emerge from this research. First, interviewees discussed the lack of adequate faculty advising regarding their macro practice interests. Advisors within MSW programs need to do a better job of helping students with macro practice concentrations consider how they will frame their education and experience for future employment. Suggestions such as highlighting particular courses, or upfront explanations of how a degree in social work applies to particular position was expressed as important by the participants in this study. MSW and BSW programs should also consider their own outreach efforts and marketing of their macro practice programs to future employers, especially among leaders with government, nonprofits and community focused groups and organizations. This is similar to the suggestion of sponsoring GSA's and History Day at local high schools. In addition to this idea, how else can social work raise its profile as a profession working for social change and aiming to improve conditions for vulnerable populations? How can social work demonstrate more than a superficial commitment to its purported value of social justice?

Programs with macro practice concentrations must also consider how they are contributing to the misinformed and negative perceptions of macro practice social workers. One suggestion to come from the study was the hiring of tenure level faculty with experience and interest in teaching and research related to areas of community organization, policy, and social action. In making this commitment, programs can expand the breadth of classes they offer in macro practice concentrations, as compared to those in their direct practice or clinical concentrations. More critically engaging in these

tensions, helping cohorts discuss and address them, and supporting both concentrations in their efforts to be effective practitioners may help to ease these tensions as students enter the professional world.

Post-formal Socialization

The story most often told among macro practice social workers in this study was their struggle with professional identity and a sense of professional isolation. This is a significant area where formal networks and associations could do a better job of reaching out and connecting with macro practice social workers. Several of the interviewees talked about the irrelevance of NASW to their work. They did not see NASW offering any kind of macro practice professional development opportunities, supervision, or educational materials. None of them were familiar with national efforts to improve macro practice social work, such as the Special Commission on Macro Practice or the Association of Community Organizing and Social Administration (ACOSA). A small number of respondents were familiar or involved with local networks, but these local networks seemed to be having very minimal impact or were used infrequently. Suggestions such as a marketing campaign to raise the profile of macro practice social work were made, but always as something these more formal organizations should be doing of behalf of the profession. Most respondents identified small, informal personal and professional networks they relied upon, usually consisting of former MSW classmates. These networks grew organically, but started as a result of the formal socialization stage. How can NASW, MSW programs, and even regulatory licensing boards offer formal ways for macro practice social workers to gather, learn and support one another?

The fact that many macro practice social workers (half in this study) are operating outside the regulatory framework should be of concern to boards of social work. Stories about confusion over regulations, bullying of members who weren't licensed, or determinations of macro practice social work being deemed "not social work" need to be taken seriously. Boards should be in dialogue with macro practice social workers around their concerns about licensure, including the micro practice focus of the exams, the costs, and the lack of adequate supports for supervision and CEUs. Purposefully creating positions for macro practice social workers on the Boards would also help to inform the policies and practices being implemented.

State Boards could also explore a macro practice social work license. Depending on the political climate and desire of social workers in the state and the overall goals and orientation of the Social Work Boards, an equivalent level of licensure between macro and clinical social work may bring legitimacy for macro practice social work. It could also serve to better connect these practitioners to the profession. This issue could also be taken up by the Association of Social Work Boards which was primarily responsible for the passage of original social work licensure across the U.S. (Bibus & Boutte-Queen, 2010). While these efforts may not convince all macro practice social workers to become licensed, it may at least help them to see themselves and their work better reflected in the regulatory environment. How would regulation of the social work profession change if macro practice were more fully integrated into the regulatory process of the profession?

All of the social workers in this study had positions they found matched their education and desired area of practice. A better understanding of these opportunities would allow educators and policy leaders to make better decisions and embed accurate

information to students and the public when speaking about the employability of social workers looking to engage in systems and social change work. This lends itself to the question of why there is no systematic market analysis of the job opportunities for macro practice social workers?

Conclusion

This research explored the lived experiences of macro practice social workers, an underrepresented topic in the social work literature. Completing this study raised more questions for the field of social work. How do these stories compare with other populations, in other parts of the United States, and for those whose final degree was the BSW? Additional study of macro practice social workers in other parts of the country, from greater racial and economic diversity, with different early life experiences, and those with a BSW, but not an MSW would all provide greater insight into the professional socialization of our macro practice social workers.

Comparative research on the lived experiences of direct practice social workers could also be done to see if the themes and ideas learned in this study are unique to macro practice social work, or more representative of the field overall. This of course requires a commitment from the same institutions which have traditionally dismissed or ignored the work of macro practice social work. Changing the perception of macro practice social work, improving and strengthening the curriculum, and reforming the regulatory climate, requires the desire, will and action by our professional institutions as well as individual practitioners. A combined grasstops and grassroots movement is required to move the profession's aspirational value of social justice into one that is lived.

References

Abramovitz, M. (1996). Regulating the lives of women: Social welfare policy from colonial times to the present. (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: South End Press.

Association of Social Work Boards. (n.d.). Content Outlines and KSAs Social Work Licensing Examinations: Advanced Generalist Exams. Retrieved from https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/AdvancedGeneralistKSAs.pdf

Association of Social Work Boards. (2015). Model state social work practice act.

Austin, D. (1983). The Flexner myth and the history of social work. *Social Service Review*, *57*(3), 357–377.

Austin, M. J., Coombs, M., & Barr, B. (2005). Community-centered clinical practice: Is the integration of micro and macro practice possible? *Journal of Community Practice (13)*4.

Barak, M. M., Travis, D., & Bess, G. (2004). Exploring managers' and administrators' retrospective perceptions of their MSW field experience. *Administration in Social Work, (28)*1, 21–44.

Barnett, C., & Barnett, S. A. (1909). The beginnings of Toynbee Hall. In Towards Social Reform (pp. 239–249). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Barretti, M. (2004). What do we know about the professional socialization of our students? *Journal of Social Work Education*, *40*(2), 255–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2004.10778493

Barrows, I. (Ed.). (1893). Proceedings of the National Conference on Charities and Correction). *Official proceedings of the annual meeting: 1893*. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis.

Barrows, I. (Ed.). (1897). Proceedings of the National Conference on Charities and Correction at the 24th Annual Session Held in Toronto, Ontario. *Official proceedings of the annual meeting: 1897.* Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis.

Becker, H. S., Geer, B., Hughest, E. C., & Strauss, A. (1961). Boys in white: Student culture in medical school. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Berry, M. (1986). One hundred years on the frontiers: The settlement movement, 1886–1986. Washington, DC: United Neighborhood Center of America.

Bibus, A. A., & Boutte-Queen, N. (2010). Regulating social work: A primer on licensing practice. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.

Biggerstaff, M. A. (2000, March). A critique of the model state social work practice act. *Social Work, 45*(2), 106–115.

Biggerstaff, M. A. (2000, January). Development and validation of the social work career influence questionnaire. *Research on Social Work Practice, 10*(1), 34–54.

Birks, M., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2008). Memoing in qualitative research: Probing data and processes. *Journal of Research in Nursing, 13*(1), 68–75.

Black, P. N., Jeffreys, D., & Hartley, E. K. (1993). Personal history of psychosocial trauma in the early life of social work and business students. *Journal of Social Work Education, 29*(2), 171.

Blumer, H. (1969). Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Blumer, H. (2004). George Herbert Meade and human conduct. (T. Morrione, Ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Boehm, A., & Cohen, A. (2013). Commitment to community practice among social work students: Contributing factors. *Journal of Social Work Education, 49*(4), 601–618. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2013.812507

Bogo, M., Michalski, J. H., Raphael, D., & Roberts, R. (1995). Practice interests and self-identification among social work students: Changes over the course of graduate social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 31*(2), 228–246.

Bogo, M., Raphael, D., & Roberts, R. (1993). Interests, activities, and self-identification among social work students: Toward a definition of social work identity. *Journal of Social Work Education, 29*(3), 279.

Browne, J. Z. (1999, April). Black social workers oppose state bill. The New York Amsterdam News, p. 5.

Bruno, F. (1957). Trends in social work 1874–1956 A history based on the proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work. Chicago, IL: Columbia Press.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). (2016). Occupational outlook handbook: Social work. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). (2017). Labor force statistics from the Current Population Survey. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm

Bureau of Professional Licensing. (2017). Social Work Licensing Guide. Lansing, MI. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/Social_Work_517676_7.pdf

Butler, A. C. (1990). A reevaluation of social work students' career interests. *Journal of Social Work Education, 26*(1), 45–56.

Byers, K., & Stone, G. (1999). Roots of activism: A qualitative study of BSW students. *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work, 5*(1), 1–14.

Calhoun, C. J. (2010). Robert K. Merton: Sociology of science and sociology as science. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Carlton-LaNey, I. (1994). The career of Birdye Henrietta Haynes, a pioneer settlement house worker. *Social Service Review, 68*(2), 254–273.

Carlton-LaNey, I. (1999). African American social work pioneers' response to need. *Social Work, 44*(4), 311–321.

Carson, M. (1990). Settlement folk: Social thought and the American settlement movement 1885–1930. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Chambers, C. (1963). Seedtime of reform: American social service and social action 1918–1933. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Chambon, A., Irving, A., & Epstein, L. (Eds.). (1999). Reading Focault for social work. Chicago, IL: Columbia University Press.

Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (3rd ed., pp. 651–679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Choi, M. J., Urbanski, P., Fortune, A. E., & Rogers, C. (2015). Early career patterns for social work graduates. *Journal of Social Work Education, 513,* 475–493. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2015.1043198

Christie, A., & Kruk, E. (1998). Choosing to become a social worker: Motives, incentives, concerns and disincentives. *Social Work Education, 17*(1), 21–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479811220031

Clandinin, J., & Connelly, M. (2000). Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Costin, L. (1983). Edith Abbott and the Chicago influence on social work education. *Social Service Review, 57*(1), 94–111.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2015). 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Retrieved from https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2016). Annual statistics on social work education in the United States. Retrieved from https://www.cswe.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=992f629c-57cf-4a74-8201-1db7a6fa4667

Council on Social Work Education (n.d.). *CSWE: A brief history*. Retrieved from https://www.cswe.org/About-CSWE/CSWE-A-Brief-History.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Csikai, E. L., & Rozensky, C. (1997). "Social work idealism" and students' perceived reasons for entering social work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *33*(3).

D'aprix, A. S., & Dunlap, K. M. (2004). Goodness of fit: Career goals of MSW students and the aims of the social work profession in the United States. *Social Work Education*, *23*(3), 265–280. https://doi.org/10.1080/0261547042000224029

Davis, A. (1984). Spearheads for reform. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

DeFilice, J. (1982). The impact of professional social work education upon the acceptance of the practice principle, "don't impose your values on the client"; Adelphi University.

Elwell, F. W. (2013). Socio-cultural system. Edmonton, Canada: AU Press.

Ezell, M., Chernesky, R., & Healy, L. (2004). The learning climate for administration students. *Administration in Social Work*, *28*(1), 57–76. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v28n01_05

Fisher, R., & Corciullo, D. (2011). Rebuilding community organizing education in social work. *Journal of Community Practice*, *19*(4), 355–368. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2011.625537

Flexner, A. (1915). Is social work a profession? In Proceedings. Chicago, IL: Hildmann.

Franklin, D. (1986). Mary Richmond and Jane Addams: From moral certainty to rational inquiry in social work practice. *Social Service Review*, *60*(4), 504–525.

Fraser, H. (2004). Doing narrative research. *Qualitative Research*, *3*(2).

Gandy, J. T., & Raymond, F. B. (1979). A study of strategies used in the pursuit of legal regulation of social work. *Journal of Society and Social Welfare*, *6*,464–476.

Garcia, A. (1990). An examination of the social work profession's efforts to achieve legal regulation. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *68*, 491–497.

Garvin, C. D., & Cox, F. M. (1995). A history of community organizing since the civil war with special reference to oppressed communities. In J. Rothman, J. L. Erlich, & J. E. Tropman (Eds.), Strategies of Community Intervention (6th ed., pp. 65–100). Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock.

Gibelman, M. (1999). The search for identity: Defining social work—Past, present and future. *Social Work, (44)*4, 298–310.

Gitterman, A. (2014). Social work: A profession in search of its identity. *Journal of Social Work Education, 50* (October), 37–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2014.947898

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1999). The discovery of grounded theory. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transactions.

Grob, G. (1994). The mad among us: A history of the care of America's mentally ill. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Guy, A. (2011). Vocational choice and attitudes toward welfare policy. *British Journal of Social Work, 41*(7), 1321–1339. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcr017

Han, M., & Chow, J. C.-C. (2010). What changes MSW students' view on the mission of social work? *Social Work Education*, *29*(2), 205–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615470902912227

Hanson, J. G., & McCullagh, J. G. (1995). Career choice factors for BSW students: A 10-year perspective. *Journal of Social Work Education, 31*(1), 28–37.

Hardcastle, D. (1977). Public regulation of social work. *Social Work, 22*(1).

Hartnett, H., Harding, S., & Scanlon, E. (2005). NASW chapters: Directors perceptions of factors which impede and encourage active membership. *Journal of Community Practice, 13*(4), 69–83.

Haynes, K. S. (1998). The one hundred-year debate: Social reform versus individual treatment. *Social Work, 43*(4), 501–509.

Haynes, K. S., & Mickelson, J. S. (2010). Affecting change: Social workers in the political arena (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Healy, K. (2000). Social work practices. London, England: Sage.

Hepworth, D., Rooney, R., Rooney, G. D., Strom-Gottfried, K., & Larsen, J. A. (2009). Direct social work practice: Theory and skills (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

Hill, K. M., Ferguson, S. M., & Erickson, C. (2010). Sustaining and strengthening a macro identity: The association of macro practice social work. *Journal of Community Practice, 18*(4), 513–527. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2010.519684

Hollis, E. V., & Taylor, A. L. (1951). Social work education in the United States. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Hopkins, J. (2009). Harry Hopkins: Sudden hero, brash reformer. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Kendall, K. A. (2002). Council on social work education: Its antecedents and first twenty years. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.

Koerin, B. B., Reeves, J., & Rosenblum, A. (2000). Macro-learning opportunities: What is really happening out there in the field? *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work, 6*(1), 109–121.

Koeske, G. F., Lichtenwalter, S., & Koeske, R. D. (2005). Social workers' current and desired involvement in various practice activities: Explorations and implications. *Administration in Social Work, 29*(2), 63. https://doi.org/10.1300/J147v29n02_05

Kogut, A. (1970). The negro and the charity organization in the progressive era. *Social Service Review*, 44.

Kvale, S. (1996). InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lackie, B. (1983). The families of origin of social workers. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 11*(4), 309–322.

Ladd-Taylor, M. (1994). Mother-work: Women, child welfare and the state: 1890–1930. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Lane, R. (1939). Community organization: A preliminary inquiry into its nature and characteristics. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Langellier, K., & Peterson, E. (2004). Storytelling in daily life. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Lasch-Quinn, E. (1993). Black neighbors. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Lee, P. (1929). Social case work—Generic and specific: A report of the Milford Conference. New York, NY: American Association of Social Workers.

Lett, J. (1987). The human enterprise: A critical introduction to anthropological theory. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lightfoot, E., Nienow, M., Moua, K. N. L., Colburn, G., & Petri, A. (2016). Insights on professional identification and licensure from community practice social workers. *Journal of Community Practice*, *24*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2016.1165328

Limb, G. E., & Organista, K. C. (2006). Change between entry and graduation in MSW student views on social work's traditional mission, career motivations, and practice preferences: Caucasian, student of color and American Indian group comparisons. *Journal of Social Work Education, 42*(2), 269–290. https://doi.org/10.5175/JSWE.2006.200400458

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Loch, C. S. (1885). Charitable provision for the aged. In I. Barrows (Ed.), Official proceedings on the national conference of charities and correction, at the twelfth annual meeting held in Washington D.C. (pp. 349–350). Washington, DC: Geo. H. Ellis.

Lubove, R. (1965). The professional altruist: The emergence of social work as a career 1880–1930. New York, NY: Atheneum.

Lurie, H. (1959). *The community organization method in social work education.* New York, NY: Council on Social Work Education

Malai, R. (2014). Special commission meets with leaders of CSWE, NASW, ASWB. *NASW News, 59*(8).

Makaros, A., & Weiss-Gal, I. (2014). Comparison of the social and professional ideology of caseworkers and community social workers in Israel. *British Journal of Social Work Advance Access, 44*, 100–116. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcs096

Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counselors and Social Work Examining Board, Wis. Stat. § 15.405(7c)457 (2015).

Marsh, S. R. (1988). Antecedents to the choice of a helping career: Social work vs. business majors. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, 58*(2), 85–100.

Martin, M. E., Pine, B. A., & Healy, L. M. (1999) Mining our strengths. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 18*(1–2).

Merdinger, J. M. (1982). Socialization into a profession: The case of undergraduate social work students. *Journal of Social Work Education, 18*(2), 12–19.

Merton, J. (1968). Social theory and social structure. New York, NY: Free Press.

Merton, R., Reader, G., & Kendall, P. (Eds.). (1957). The student physician. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (2017). Licensing Counts. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/License_Counts_090115_498869_7.pdf

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, S. E. (2010). A conceptual framework for the professional socialization of social workers. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *20*(7), 924–938. https://doi.org/10.1080/1091131003751934

Miller, S. E., Tice, C. J., & Hall, D. M. H. (2008). The generalist model: Where do the micro and macro converge? *Advances in Social Work, 9*(2), 79–90.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). Research interviewing: Context and narrative. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mizrahi, T., & Dodd, S. (2013). MSW students' perspectives on social work goals and social activism before and after completing graduate education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *49*(4), 580–600. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2013.812504

Mondros, J. B., & Wilson, S. M. (1990). Staying alive: Career selection and sustenance of community organizers. *Administration in Social Work, 14*(2), 95–109.

Moran, J. R. (1989). Social work education and students' humanistic attitudes. *Journal of Social Work Education, 25*, 13–19.

National Association of Social Workers. (n.d.). *About.* Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/About

National Association of Social Workers. (1975). The 1975 NASW delegate assembly actions: Professional issues—Legal regulation for social work practice policies for a continuing effort. *NASW News, 20*, 15, 17.

Neugeboren, B. G. (1986). Systemic barriers to education in social work administration. *Administration in Social Work, 10*(2), 1–14.

Nienow, M. C. (2013). Michigan's macro practice social work licensing: The next evolution in social work regulation? St. Paul, MN: Unpublished.

Nienow, M. C. (2014). Defining social work: The early meaning and understanding of social work in the National Conference of Charities and Correction (1885–1910). St. Paul, MN: Unpublished.

O'Connor, I., & Dalgleish, L. (1986). The impact of social work education: A personal construct reconceptualization. *Journal of Social Work Education, 22*, 6–30.

Olin, J. (2013). The public and the profession's perception of social work. *Columbia Social Work Review*, IV, 92–102.

Orten, J. D. (1981). Influencing attitudes: A study of social work students. *Social Work Research and Abstracts, 26*, 11–17.

Park, Y., & Kemp, S. P. (2006). Little alien colonies: Representations of immigrants and their neighborhoods in social work discourse, 1875–1924. *Social Service Review, 80*(4), 705–730.

Payne, M. (2006). What is professional social work? (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Perry, R. E. (1999). An examination of the practice preferences and career choices of MSW students over the course of their education. University of California, Berkeley.

Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically. In J. Clandinin (Ed.), Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology (pp. 3–34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Plitt Donaldson, L., Hill, K. M., Ferguson, S. M., Fogel, S., & Erickson, C. (2014). Contemporary social work licensure: Implications for macro social work practice and education. *Social Work, 59*(1), 52–61. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swt045

Polkinghorn, D. (1988). Narrative knowing and the human sciences. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Pritzker, S., & Applewhite, S. R. (2015). Going "macro": Exploring the careers of macro practitioners. *Social Work* (United States), *60*(3), 191–199. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swv019

Pumphrey, R., & Pumphrey, M. (Eds.). (1961). The heritage of American social work. Chicago, IL: Columbia University.

Quimby, J. L., & DeSantis, A. M. (2006). The influence of role models on women's career choices. *Career Development Quarterly*, *54*(June), 297–306. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2006.tb00195.x

Regehr, C., Bogo, M., Donovan, K., Lim, A., & Regehr, G. (2011). Evaluating a scale to measure student competencies in macro social work practice. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *38*(1, SI), 100–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2011.616756

Reisch, M. (2015). Why macro practice matters. Working paper. Lynwood, IL: ACOSA.

Reisch, M., & Andrews, J. (2002). *The road not taken: A history of radical social work in the United States.* New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.

Richmond, M. (1917). Social diagnosis. New York, NY: Russel Sage Foundation.

Richmond, M. (1922). What is social case work? New York, NY: Russel Sage Foundation.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). Narrative methods for the human sciences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ritter, J. A. (2008). A national study predicting licensed social workers' levels of political participation: the role of resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks. *The Social Worker*, *53*, 347–357. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/53.4.347

Rompf, E., & Royse, D. (1994). Choice of social work as a career: Possible influences. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *30*, 163–171.

Rothman, J. (2013). Education for macro intervention: A survey of problems and prospects. Lynwood, IL: ACOSA

Rothman, J., & Mizrahi, T. (2014). Balancing micro and macro practice: A challenge for social work. *Social Work* (United States), *59*(1), 91–93. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swt067

Rubin, A., & Johnson, P. J. (1984). Direct practice interests of entering MSW students. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *20*(2), 5–16.

Rubin, A., Johnson, P. J., & DeWeaver, K. L. (1986). Direct practice interests of MSW students: Changes from entry to graduation. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *22*(2), 98–108.

Sather, P., Weitz, B., & Carlson, P. (2007). Engaging students in macro issues through community-based learning: The policy, practice, and research sequence. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, *27*(3/4), 61. https://doi.org/doi:10.1300/J067v27n03_05

Schneider, E. C. (1992). In the web of class. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Segal-Engelchin, D., & Kaufman, R. (2008). Micro or macro orientation? Israeli students' career interests in an antisocial era. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *44*(3), 139.

Shoemaker, L. M. (1998). Early conflicts in social work education. *Social Service Review, 72*(2), 182–191.

Shuval, J. T., & Adler, I. (1980). The role of models in professional socialization. *Psychology and Medical Sociology*, *14*(1), 5–14.

Simpson, I. H., & Back, K. W. (1979). From student to nurse: A longitudinal study of socialization. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Social Work Licensure Act, Mich., Pub. Hlth Act §333.18501, 2004.

Specht, H., & Courtney, M. (1994). Unfaithful angels. New York, NY: Free Press.

Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice. (n.d., a.) *About the special commission*. Retrieved from http://www.acosa.org/joomla/about-the-special-commission

Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice (n.d., b.) *Special commission resources.* Retrieved from http://www.acosa.org/joomla/special-commission-resources

Stuart, P., Leighninger, L., & Donahoe, J. N. (1993). Reviewing our past: A history of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. Eau Claire, WI: Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors.

Trattner, W. (1999). From poor law to welfare state (6th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Vincent, J. (1996). Why ever do we do it? Unconscious motivation in choosing social work as a career. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, *10*(1), 63–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650539608415666

Wagner, D. (1989). Fate of idealism in social work: Alternative experiences of professional careers. *Social Work, 61*(2), 389–395.

Weiss, I., Gal, J., & Cnaan, R. A. (2004). Social work education as professional socialization. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *31*(1), 13–31. https://doi.org/10.1300/J079v31n01

Weiss, I., Gal, J., & Katan, J. (2006). Social policy for social work: A teaching agenda. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*, 789–806. https://doi.org/doi:10.1093/bjsw/bch324

Wenocur, S., & Reisch, M. (1989). From charity to enterprise. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Whitaker, T., & Arrington, P. (2008). Social workers at work. Washington, DC: NASW.

Wolk, J., Pray, J., Weismuller, T. & Dempsey, D. (1996). Political practica: Educating social work students for policymaking. Journal of Social Work Education, 32, 91-100.

Yin, R. K. (2014). Case study research: Design and methods (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A

Minnesota Statute 148E.010 , Subd. 11

Subd. 11. Practice of social work.

(a) “Practice of social work” means working to maintain, restore, or improve behavioral, cognitive, emotional, mental, or social functioning of clients, in a manner that applies accepted professional social work knowledge, skills, and values, including the person-in-environment perspective, by providing in person or through telephone, video conferencing, or electronic means one or more of the social work services described in paragraph (b), clauses (1) to (3). Social work services may address conditions that impair or limit behavioral, cognitive, emotional, mental, or social functioning. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, the following: abuse and neglect of children or vulnerable adults, addictions, developmental disorders, disabilities, discrimination, illness, injuries, poverty, and trauma. Practice of social work also means providing social work services in a position for which the educational basis is the individual’s degree in social work described in subdivision 13.

(b) Social work services include:

(1) providing assessment and intervention through direct contact with clients, developing a plan based on information from an assessment, and providing services which include, but are not limited to, assessment, case management, client-centered advocacy, client education, consultation, counseling, crisis intervention, and referral;

(2) providing for the direct or indirect benefit of clients through administrative, educational, policy, or research services including, but not limited to:

(i) advocating for policies, programs, or services to improve the wellbeing of clients;

(ii) conducting research related to social work services;

(iii) developing and administering programs which provide social work services;

(iv) engaging in community organization to address social problems through planned collective action;

(v) supervising individuals who provide social work services to clients;

(vi) supervising social workers in order to comply with the supervised practice requirements specified in sections 148E.100 to 148E.125; and

(vii) teaching professional social work knowledge, skills, and values to students; and

(3) engaging in clinical practice.

Appendix B

Participants

Table C-1. *Demographic Data for Participants*

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	BSW?	Point in time	MSW Grad	Lic?	Current job title
Amber	41	White	Female	Yes	During BSW	2001	Yes	Policy Analyst
Bethany	33	White	Female	No	During MSW	2010	No	Program Manager
Catherine	45	White	Female	No	After MSW	1995	Yes	CEO
Diane	36	White	Female	Yes	After BSW	2009	Yes	Policy Director
Elizabeth	42	White	Female	Yes	Before BSW	2003	No	State Policy Coord.
Frances	28	White	Female	Yes	After BSW	2013	No	County planning analyst
Grace	26	White	Female	Yes	During BSW	2013	Yes	Program Manager
Heather	49	White	Female	No	Before MSW	2014	Yes	Treatment Court Case Coord.
Isaac	34	White	Male	Yes	Before BSW	2007	No	Policy Director
Jacob	43	Asian	Male	No	Before MSW	2013	No	Coord. of data, research, and quality improvement
Kaitlin	33	White	Female	No	Before MSW	2012	No	Program Manager
Laura	34	Native American	Female	No	After MSW	2014	Yes	State Tribal Liaison

(continued)

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	BSW?	Point in time	MSW Grad	Lic?	Current job title
Table C-1., continued								
Megan	33	White	Female	No	During MSW	2010	No	Program Director
Nancy	26	White	Female	Yes	During BSW	2014	Yes	Coord. of case mgmt. and data analysis

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Pre-Socialization

How did you first become interested in macro practice social work?

What role do you think your childhood or family environment played in this interest?

How did you learn more about macro practice social work?

Who supported your decision to pursue macro practice social work?

Formal Socialization

Tell me about your undergraduate degree? How useful was it in helping you become a macro practice social worker?

What experiences did you have as an undergraduate that may have contributed to your interest in macro practice social work? (e.g., field experience, volunteering, political action, mentors, job experience)

What role did your undergraduate degree play in pursuing an MSW?

How did you choose to pursue an MSW?

- What relevant recruitment material did you receive? What material do you wish you had received?
- What additional information or support did you receive in making your decision?

How did you select your MSW concentration?

How useful was your MSW education in helping you become a community practice social worker?

What are some of the things about macro practice social work you wish you had known before entering the MSW program?

What are some of the things you wish you had learned while in the MSW program that you didn't?

How did faculty in your MSW program support your interest in macro practice?

Tell me about the curriculum in your MSW?

- How did the content of your program match (not match) your expectations?
- How helpful was the content of your MSW program for your current macro practice social work?

How did the class sequence of your MSW support (or not) you becoming a macro practice social worker?

How did you select your field experience?

How were you supported in your field experience selection?

Describe your field experience…

Tell me about your field instructors ... did they support your interest in macro practice?

What role did field evaluations play in your experience of becoming a macro practice social worker?

What other opportunities did you have during your MSW to learn about or engage in macro practice, outside of the classroom and field experiences?

What about your fellow students, did they support your interest in macro practice?

Who or what else was important for you in pursuing macro practice social work?

Practice after formal socialization

What are some of the barriers you experienced with becoming a macro practice social worker?

How have you overcome these barriers?

Are you licensed? Why or why not?

What role has licensure played in your professional life as a macro practice social worker?

Tell me about the paid positions you've had since obtaining your MSW?

What about volunteer positions?

How have your views of macro practice changed since you first decided to pursue a macro practice social work career?